MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

THE FANTASTIC FOUR®

VOLUME 11

THE FANTASTIC FOUR® Nos. 105-116

STAN LEE & JOHN BUSCEMA

WITH JOHN ROMITA & JACK KIRBY

MARVEL

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

THE Fantastic FOUR

VOLUME 11

COLLECTING

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STAN LEE • JOHN BUSCEMA

WITH JOHN ROMITA & JACK KIRBY

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Nos. 105-116

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INTRODUCTION
BY JON B. COOKE

It was 1970 and *The Fantastic Four* was finished. Less then a decade into its run and with a little over 100 issues under its belt, the flagship title of the Marvel Comics line, the one that started the "Marvel Age of Comics" in 1961, the series that first put editor-writer-head honcho Stan "The Man" Lee and his madcap Marvel Bullpen on the map, was kaput. Finito. Lo, there really shall be an ending...

At least that's what artist John Romita, Sr., believed when he heard the bombshell news that FF co-creator Jack Kirby was defecting from the House of Ideas. After drawing and usually plotting 102 issues (plus annuals) starring Reed Richards and Company (and a zillion other comics for the imprint), the King was moving over to DC Comics, where he was to helm his own series of comics as artist, writer and (for three of the four, at least) editor. Kirby was through with the hassles, heartache and disrespect he felt he was suffering at Marvel, and ready to create his magnum opus at the "Distinguished Competition," what would soon be called his ambitious "Fourth World" series, a quartet of titles that included *New Gods* and *Mister Miracle.*

In a 1999 interview, John Romita, Sr., told me, "I found myself saying to Stan, 'Who the hell's going to do FF? We don't have anybody good enough!' He said, 'YOU'RE gonna do it,' and I almost fell down." Though Kirby was a huge influence on Romita (one of Johnny's earliest professional jobs was to delineate the quintessential Kirby hero, Captain America, during the star-spangled hero's short-lived revival in the 1950s), the artist was terrified at the prospect. "I didn't feel qualified to do it, and I sweated through four issues with Jack Kirby books surrounding me," Romita said with a laugh. "Every inch of my drawing table had a Jack Kirby page on it, and I did those four [*FF* #103-106] strictly from Jack's stuff. I felt obliged to make it a seamless transition."

But the period covered in this volume proves the era was anything but a "seamless" changeover for the "World's Greatest Comic Magazine," as the title struggled to regain its footing in this post-Kirby epoch. Romita was already swamped with his monthly *Amazing Spider-Man* assignment (19 pages of pencils and inks, plus cover!), so it's a miracle the "Jazzy" was able to produce those four issues of *Fantastic Four.* (Of his *FF* work, Romita said, "For ten years *Fantastic Four* was Kirby. I didn't feel like anyone had the right to change it. When I did the *Fantastic Four* I did it as Kirby. If it looked like me it's only because I couldn't mimic him any better.") Still, the workload was too much, so Stan pulled in another Marvel stalwart, the legendary John Buscema to delineate the *FF.*

John Buscema, who had worked steady in the Marvel Bullpen since 1966, thought Kirby's departure meant more than just the end of one comic book title. He told me in 1997 he thought the writing was on the wall for the magazine line: "I'll never forget when I walked into Stan's office and heard that Jack left. I thought they were going to close up! As far as I was concerned, Jack was the backbone of Marvel."

Buscema, who was already sporting his Kirbyesque take in the pages of *The Mighty Thor,* channeled the King's stylings even more slavishly in his first few *FF* issues, which started with #107. "I was given *The Fantastic Four,*" he said. "That was very intimidating, following the best!" Buscema, too, studied Jack's work closely and when he was asked what he learned from the exercise, John said, "The layouts, for cryin' out loud! I copied! Every time I needed a panel, I'd look up at one of his panels and just rearrange it. If you look at some of the early stuff I did – y'know, where Kirby had the explosions with a bunch of guys flying all over the place? I'd swipe them cold!" John said with a chuckle. "Stan was happy. The editors were happy, so I was happy."

As is commonly known, Kirby not only penciled the exploits of The Fantastic Four, he also plotted most, if not all, of the issues. As his second-to-last submission, the creator delivered a story entitled "The Menace of the Mega-Men," which was intended to appear as *FF* #102 (as noted in the margins of the splash page). For whatever reason, whether the valid concerns of an editor or as spite from a hurt ex-partner, Stan yanked the tale from the schedule, replacing it with Kirby's final FF exploit, "The Strength of the Sub-Mariner," thus shelving the postponed saga for future revision.

"The Menace of the Mega-Men" finally appeared (after a fashion) in *FF* #108, retitled "The Monstrous Mystery of the Nega-Man," altered considerably in the Marvel offices. As editor John Morrow of *The Jack Kirby Collector* relates in a recent essay, "The Bullpen eventually chopped Kirby's originals up, rearranged panels, had John Buscema add some filler art, changed the ending, sent the whole thing to Joe Sinnott to ink, and published it (not so coincidentally) the same month Kirby's *New Gods* #1 came out at DC Comics. The end result was a real mess that, quite frankly, didn't make much sense."

(In February 2008, Marvel released *Fantastic Four: The Lost Adventure,* a one-shot comic book which collected *FF* #108, Kirby's existing pencil pages, and a centerpiece: a finished version, based on the King's original story, complete with new Stan Lee dialogue and inks by Joe Sinnott, as well as an article by Morrow on the story behind the story, excerpted above.)

To be sure, *The Fantastic Four* had its work cut out for it when Jack "The King" Kirby left the title and, as you'll see in the pages within, this was a time to rebuild. Yet, in remarkably short order, Stan, John, and Joe (with help from Frank Giacoia and Archie Goodwin) ushered in some new glory days for the team. So enough background already, effendi: On to the stories… !

2008

Jon B. Cooke, editor of the five-time Eisner Award-winning magazine for "Best Comics-Related Periodical," Comic Book Artist, *is proud to have been one-time associate editor of* The Jack Kirby Collector. *He is also an instructor at the Rhode Island School of Design, a freelance graphic designer, and the writer/co-producer of the full-length feature film documentary* Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist. *Jon lives in Rhode Island with his wife and three sons.*

FANTASTIC FOUR

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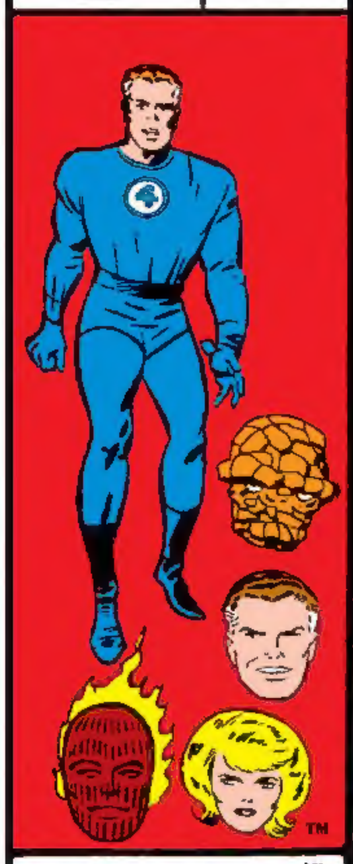

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

IN THIS ISSUE: THE MOST FRIGHTENING DECISION OF ALL!

NO, TORCH-- NO!

NO MATTER WHAT WE DO--WE LOSE!

SHE'S DONE FOR, UNLESS--

MANKIND IS DOOMED! EVEN THE FF ARE HELPLESS WHEN THE MONSTER STALKS THE STREETS!

THE F.F. FACE THEIR STRANGEST CRISIS, WHEN THEY FIND--

THE MONSTER IN THE STREETS!

MOMMY! MOMMY! LOOK! LOOK WHO IT IS!

TOMMY! BE QUIET! HE'LL HEAR YOU!

IT'S THE THING! THE STRONG, FUNNY-LOOKING THING!

IT'S OKAY, LADY! HE DON'T BOTHER ME NONE!

I BEEN INSULTED BY EXPERTS!

CURB YOUR DOG

HERE, CRYS-- I'LL WARM UP YOUR HOT DOG FOR-- HEY!

WHAT IS IT, HONEY? WHAT'S WRONG?

I DON'T KNOW, JOHNNY! ALL OF A SUDDEN-- I FEEL-- SO WEAK!

EVEN SUPERHEROES ENJOY A HOT DOG IN THE OPEN AIR! BUT, FROM THIS FATEFUL MOMENT ON, THEIR LIVES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME--!

STORY: STAN LEE
ILLUSTRATION: JOHN ROMITA
JOHN VERPOORTEN
LETTERING: ARTIE SIMEK

SOME SUPERHERO I AM! THAT KID'LL HAVE NIGHTMARES FER DAYS!

IN LIVIN' COLOR, YET!

MAYBE YOU'RE TIRED, HONEY? WE'VE BEEN SHOPPING FOR HOURS!

I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING, JOHNNY!

HEY! LOOK WHATCHA DID!

WHAT'LL PEOPLE SAY WHEN THEY HEAR I BEEN CAVORTIN' WIT' A LITTERBUG?

KNOCK IT OFF, BEN! I'M-- WORRIED ABOUT CRYSTAL!

DON'T LET ME SPOIL YOUR DAY, JOHNNY!

MAYBE I JUST ATE TOO MANY HOT DOGS!

DIDJA HAVETA MENTION THAT?

I HAD ME A DOZEN!

URP!

BU-ROOOM!

LISTEN! SOME KIND OF-- EXPLOSION --OFF IN THE DISTANCE!

MEBBE I BURPED TOO HARD?

LOOK! BEHIND THOSE BUILD-INGS--A STRANGE GLOW IN THE SKY!

TA HECK WITH THE GLOW! LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENIN' RIGHT HERE!

BEN'S RIGHT! THE BUILDING ABOVE US-- IT'S STARTING TO CRUMBLE!

IT WUZ THE EXPLOSION! IT'S KNOCKIN' CHUNKS'A GRANITE INTA THE STREET!

IF ANYONE GITS HIT--IT'S GOODBYE CHARLIE!

BUT I CAN'T KEEP BATTIN' 'EM OUTTA THE WAY FEREVER!

SPRAK!

HOW DID IT HAPPEN? IT-- IT'S LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE!

BEN! IF THE CRACKS IN THIS WALL GET ANY WORSE--!

AWRIGHT! AWRIGHT! I GIT THE IDEA!

KRUNCH

THIS'LL KEEP IT FROM FALLIN' APART WHILE I SHOVE THE BLASTED THING BACK!

BUT IF ANY O' THEM FALLIN' STONES HIT ANYBODY--

THEY WON'T! MY ELEMENTAL ENERGY BOLTS WILL STOP THEM!

NICE WORK, KIDDO! YA-- HEY!

EVERYTHING--SPINNING AROUND! I--I CAN'T-- OHHH--

CRYS!

SHE'S--OUT COLD! THIS NEVER HAPPENED TO HER BEFORE!

SOMETHING'S WRONG! SOMETHING--MORE SERIOUS --THAN SHE LET ON TO!

BUT-- WHAT?

BEN! I'M FLYING HER TO THE LAB!

REED'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO!

SURE--HE'LL SEND FER A DOCTOR--LIKE ANYONE ELSE!

BUT GO AHEAD, KID! I'LL MIND THE STORE!

NO PARKING

AND, EVEN AS THE HUMAN TORCH HEADS FOR THE FF's PENTHOUSE HEADQUARTERS--

NOW THAT WE HAVE A BREATHING SPELL AT LAST--

I'VE GOT TO MAKE GOOD MY PROMISE TO BEN!

HE PROBABLY THINKS I'VE FORGOTTEN BY NOW--

OR, EVEN WORSE--THAT I DON'T EVEN CARE!

BUT IT WAS POOR BEN WHO GOT THE SHORT END OF THE STICK--

AND, IN A WAY, IT WAS ALL MY FAULT!

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT WAS SO MANY YEARS AGO THAT THE FOUR OF US ATTEMPTED MAN'S FIRST FLIGHT TO THE MOON--

--AND WERE FORCED TO RETURN--BY THOSE FATEFUL COSMIC RAYS!

"RAYS WHICH GAVE US EACH OUR FANTASTIC, SUPERHUMAN POWERS!"

MY BODY--IN FLAMES!

I'VE BECOME A HUMAN TORCH!

MY LIMBS--THEY'VE BECOME SUPPLE--ELASTIC! THEY CAN STRETCH--LIKE RUBBER!

IT'S LIKE A NIGHT-MARE! I'M TURNING--INVISIBLE!

"BUT IT WAS **BEN**--GOOD OLD BEN--OUR PILOT--MY **FRIEND**--WHO WAS AFFECTED THE **MOST**--

"THE POWER **HE** GAINED WAS MATCHLESS, ALMOST INDESCRIBABLE **STRENGTH**--

"BUT, THE AWFUL **PRICE** FOR HIS AWESOME, NEW-FOUND **POWER**--

"--WAS **HIGHER** THAN ANYONE SHOULD EVER HAVE TO **PAY!**"

I TURNED INTO--AN UGLY, ORANGE-SKINNED *THING!*

BUT I CAN'T CHANGE *BACK*--LIKE THE *OTHERS* CAN!

THERE *MUST* BE A WAY--TO RETURN HIM TO *NORMAL*--PERMANENTLY!

AND I'LL *NEVER* STOP WORKING--I'LL NEVER STOP *TRYING*--TO *FIND* IT!

NOTE: *THE FOREGOING PANELS HAVE BEEN CAPSULIZED FROM THE ALMOST LEGENDARY PREMIERE ISSUE OF* ***FANTASTIC FOUR #1*** *--SENTIMENTAL STAN.*

I *OWE* THAT TO BEN--MORE THAN--*WHA*--? WHO'S *THERE?*

JOHNNY! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT *HAPPENED?*

REED--IT'S *CRYSTAL!*

SHE *COLLAPSED* IN THE STREET! THERE'S SOMETHING *WRONG*--SOMETHING *SERIOUS!*

I'M *SCARED*, REED! I'VE NEVER *SEEN* HER LIKE THIS!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, IN ANOTHER PART OF TOWN--

THIS IS THE FIRST REAL *CHANCE* I'VE HAD TO GO *SHOPPING* IN WEEKS!

AND I'M JUST *ADORING* EVERY MINUTE OF IT!

THE *LAST* TIME I BOUGHT A WARDROBE--I WAS SHOPPING FOR *MATERNITY* CLOTHES!

BUT NOW, WITH LITTLE *FRANKLIN* SAFELY IN THE CARE OF THAT WONDERFUL *AGATHA HARKNESS*--

I CAN LET MYSELF *GO* WITH SOME FRILLY, FUNKY *FUN-THINGS!*

IT'S EASIER TO BUY *SLACKS* THAN TO DECIDE BETWEEN *MINIS* AND *MIDIS!* I THINK I'LL--

THAT SUDDEN *RUMBLE!* WHAT CAN IT *BE?*

IT'S *IMPOSSIBLE!* THERE'S *NEVER* BEEN AN *EARTHQUAKE* IN NEW YORK! AND YET--

THE WHOLE *BUILDING* IS-- *SHUDDERING*-- STARTING TO *COLLAPSE!*

STAY BACK! KEEP *CALM*-- DON'T *PANIC!*

MY INVISIBLE *FORCE FIELD* CAN SHIELD THE CUSTOMERS TILL--

IT'S STARTING TO *SUBSIDE!* THE TREMORS ARE GETTING *WEAKER!*

BUT--I'VE GOT TO LEARN-- WHAT *CAUSED* IT!

OUTSIDE THE *WINDOW*--A STRANGE, GLOWING *MASS* OF--OF *WHAT*??

WHATEVER IT IS--IT'S PASSING BY--UNCHECKED --AS IF IT HAS--A MIND OF ITS *OWN*!

THE FURTHER *AWAY* IT GOES--THE *LESS* THE BUILDING SHAKES!

THERE'S NO DOUBT *ABOUT* IT-- IT'S SEETHING WITH PURE, DEADLY *POWER*!

BUT--IT'S MOVING SO *AIMLESSLY*-- CAUSING TERRIBLE *DAMAGE*--JUST BY PASSING *BY*!

WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT CAN ITS *PURPOSE* BE?

I'VE GOT TO CONTACT *REED*!

IF *ANYONE* CAN FIGURE OUT--OH *NO*!

MY ELECTRONIC *BELT ALARM*! IT DOESN'T *WORK*!

THE GLOWING *MASS*--MUST BE INTERFERING WITH MY *SIGNAL*!

BUT--HOW CAN I REACH MY *HUSBAND*?!!

LADY! GET *BACK* HERE! STAY *AWAY* FROM THAT!

I DON'T WANT ANYONE *HURT* TILL WE FIGURE OUT HOW TO *DESTROY* IT!

DESTROY IT? NO! *NO!* YOU *MUSTN'T!*

SOMEONE SHOUTING FROM A *CAR*-- RACING UP *BEHIND* ME!

IT MUST *NOT* BE DESTROYED! IT COULD BE THE *GREATEST* SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY OF ALL TIME!

AS AN OLD COLLEAGUE OF YOUR *HUSBAND*, I KNOW THAT REED RICHARDS WOULD *AGREE* WITH ME!

DR. ZOLTEN RAMBOW! WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

MRS. RICHARDS! I WAS DRIVING BY--I *SAW* IT-- I'VE BEEN *FOLLOWING* IT!

IT COULD BE FROM ANOTHER *PLANET*-- ANOTHER *DIMENSION!* IT COULD BE TRYING TO *COMMUNICATE* WITH US!

BUT WHAT IF IT'S *NOT?* WHAT IF IT'S SOME SORT OF UNTHINKING *NATURAL PHENOMINON* THAT MAY DESTROY US *ALL?*

NO! NO! IT *HAS* INTELLIGENCE! IT CAN *THINK*--IT CAN *FEEL!*

LOOK AT IT *CLOSELY*--AS *I'VE* BEEN DOING! LOOK-- *LOOK!*

ALL I SEE IS-- A SMOLDERING *GLOW!*

NO! LOOK MORE *CLOSELY*--FOCUS YOUR EYES-- RIGHT AT THE *CENTER!*

THERE! IT'S STARTING TO *APPEAR* AGAIN!

IS IT MY *IMAGINATION*-- OR--?

NO! I *DO* SEE SOMETHING! I *DO!!*

IT'S ONLY VISIBLE FOR A *SECOND*-- AND THEN THE GLOW *CONCEALS* IT--

BUT THERE'S A *LIVING BEING*-- *WITHIN* THE MASS!

IT'S GATHERING SPEED--TRYING TO ESCAPE! IT KNOWS WE'VE SEEN IT!

WAIT! COME BACK! YOU MUST COME BACK!

DR. RAMBOW--BE CAREFUL!

EVEN IF IT IS A THINKING FORM OF LIFE--

HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT IT HASN'T COME TO--DESTROY US?

BUT, SINCE NO ONE CAN YET ANSWER SUE'S FATEFUL QUESTION, LET'S RETURN ONCE AGAIN TO F.F. HEADQUARTERS, WHERE WE FIND--

HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE LEAVE HER THERE LIKE THAT?

IF YOU CAN'T HELP HER--SAY SO, MAN!

FOR ALL I KNOW--SHE MAY BE DYING--WHILE NOBODY'S DOING ANYTHING!

GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF, JOHNNY!

NOTHING CAN BE DONE TILL I COMPLETE HER BLOOD ANALYSIS!

OKAY, OKAY! JUST REMEMBER I LOVE THE GIRL!

HOW COOL WOULD YOU BE--IF SIS WERE IN HER PLACE?

I'D LIKE TO THINK MY REACTION WOULD BE THE SAME!

ANYONE CAN LOSE HIS HEAD, LAD--CAN FLY OFF THE HANDLE--

BUT THAT'S NEVER SAVED A PERSON YET!

HOLD IT! I'M GETTING SOMETHING!

THE DNA READING--THE HELIX REVEALS--

GOOD LORD! IT JUST CAN'T BE!

IT'S THE LAST THING--I'D HAVE EVER EXPECTED!

THE WAY YOU *SAID* THAT--I--I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO *ASK!*

NOT ONLY DOES HER *BLOOD TEST* INDICATE THE TROUBLE WITH *CRYSTAL*--

BUT IT'S GIVEN ME A CLUE TO *BEN'S* DILEMMA, AS WELL!

WHAT'S *HE* GOT TO DO WITH THIS? IT'S *CRYSTAL* WHO'S SICK!

WHAT *GIVES*, GUYS? SOMEONE MENTION MY *NAME?*

BEN! WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU?

NOTHIN' MUCH! I JUST BEEN HOLDIN' UP A WHOLE BLAMED *BUILDING!*

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?* WHERE? HOW? *WHY?*

WE CAN TELL YOU ABOUT THAT *LATER*, REED! WHAT ABOUT *CRYS?*

I'VE JUST CHECKED HER *BLOOD*, BEN--

AND I SAW A RARE *CHEMICAL INGREDIENT* THAT MAY TURN YOU BACK TO *NORMAL*, OLD FRIEND!

YA *MEAN* IT?

YEOOOWEE! OL' BASHFUL *BENJY'S* GONNA BE A *LOVER BOY* AGAIN!

REED! WHY THE *STALLING?* WHY WON'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT *CRYS?*

I--DON'T KNOW HOW --TO FIND THE *WORDS*, SON--

SHE'LL *RECOVER*-- FROM THIS ATTACK-- BUT--

SHE MUST *RETURN* TO HER HOME-- WITH THE *INHUMANS!*

IF--SHE *REMAINS* HERE AMONG US--IT WILL MEAN-- HER *DEATH!*

WHAT?!!

LOOK, BROTHER-IN-LAW--IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF SOME KINDA JOKE--!!

I ONLY WISH IT WERE JOHNNY! BUT--THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!

THE TWO OF YOU WILL HAVE TO BE PARTED ONCE MORE!

SHE'S SPENT SO MANY YEARS OF HER LIFE IN THE POLLUTION-FREE ENVIRONMENT OF THE INHUMANS--

SHE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO BUILD UP A RESISTANCE TO ALL THE THINGS THAT PLAGUE US!

BUT WE LOVE EACH OTHER! WE CAN'T BE SEPARATED AGAIN!

WOULD YOU RATHER-- LOSE HER--FOREVER?

JOHNNY-- I HEARD HIM! HE'S RIGHT, MY DARLING!

NO! IT CAN'T BE! IT ISN'T FAIR! I CAN'T LOSE YOU NOW!

WE WON'T BE LOSING EACH OTHER, DEAREST! IT WON'T BE-- FOREVER!

I--I COULDN'T BEAR--TO THINK OF THAT!

LET'S GO, BEN! THEY BOTH-- DESERVE THIS MOMENT-- ALONE!

IT NEVER ENDS, DOES IT, STRETCH?

AFTER YA FIND A CURE FOR ME-- YA'LL HAVETA GIT BACK TO HER AGAIN!

MINUTES LATER--

WHAT IF--YA GUESSED WRONG? WHAT IF YA DON'T MANAGE TA CHANGE ME?

THEN WE'LL START TO LEARN--HOW MANY DISAPPOINTMENTS A MAN CAN TAKE!

QUIET! HERE COME JOHNNY AND CRYSTAL!

I CAME TO SAY-- GOOD-BYE!

I'VE ALREADY SENT FOR *LOCKJAW*--THE INHUMANS' DIMENSION-BRIDGING *DOG* WHICH CAN TRANSPORT ME *BACK* TO THE HIDDEN REALM!

YOU MUSTN'T FEEL TOO *BADLY*, MR. RICHARDS--ABOUT WHAT HAS *HAPPENED*--

IF NOT FOR *YOU*--I MIGHT HAVE *REMAINED* HERE--ONLY TO MEET MY *DEATH!*

I'LL NEVER FORGET YOUR *KINDNESSES*--OR THE WAY YOU MADE ME FEEL AS IF I WAS--*TRULY* ONE OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR!*

I *BEG* YOU--TO LET ME *KEEP* MY COSTUME!

OF *COURSE* YOU MAY!

AND *YOU*, MR. GRIMM! TO ME, YOU'LL ALWAYS BE THE KINDEST--AND THE GENTLEST --AND THE MOST *BEAUTIFUL* PERSON I'VE EVER KNOWN!

YEAH--SNIFF--THAT'S MY *PROBLEM!* I ALWAYS BEEN JUST ANOTHER *PRETTY FACE!*

TAKE *CARE* O' YERSELF, KID--HEAR?

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HEY! LOOK WHO'S *HERE!*

BIG AS LIFE 'N TWICE AS *UGLY!*

IT'S *LOCKJAW!* HE'S ACTIVATED HIS *INTER-DIMENSIONAL SCREEN!*

GIT THAT *LOOK* OFF'A YER FACE, FLEABAG!

NO MATTER *WHAT* YA THINK, WE AINT *RELATED!*

LET'S *GO*, BEN! THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN *SAY*--NOTHING WE CAN *DO*--TO EASE THE PAIN OF--THEIR *PARTING!*

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LOCKJAW IS CREATING HIS *DIMENSIONAL FIELD* NOW, JOHNNY!

IT'S BEST THAT-- WE LEAVE *QUICKLY!* IT WILL LESSEN--THE PAIN!

NO, CRYS--*NO!* IT ISN'T *RIGHT!* IT ISN'T *FAIR!*

CRYS!

JOHNNY--COME *BACK!* IF YOU TOUCH *LOCKJAW* WHILE HE'S *TELEPORTING*--

HE WON'T *LISTEN!* HE'S *WILD* WITH GRIEF! I'VE GOT TO *GRAB* HIM!

I'VE GOTTA CUT *OUT!* GOTTA BE *ALONE!*

DON'T WANNA *SEE* ANYONE-- *TALK* TO ANYONE!

IF I DON'T --LET OFF *STEAM*-- I'LL GO OUTTA MY *SKULL!*

WHERE'S HE *HEADIN'* FOR?

IT DOESN'T *MATTER,* BEN!

NO! YOU WON'T *STOP* ME!

I'LL *FLAME ON!* I'LL--

NO-- I *CAN'T!* I CAN'T *DO* IT TO REED! NOT *REED!*

YOU *OKAY,* THIN MAN? DID THE KID *BARBEQUE* YER BACK-SLAPPER?

I'M *ALL RIGHT,* BEN! HE FLAMED OFF JUST IN *TIME!*

SHE'S *GONE!* I'VE *LOST* HER!

I KNOW HOW HE MUST *FEEL!* THE BEST THING HE CAN *DO* IS GET OFF BY HIMSELF--

--TILL HE GETS IT OUT OF HIS SYSTEM.!

HEY--WHATCHA SAID *BEFORE*-- ABOUT GETTIN' ME BACK TA *NORMAL*--

YA WEREN'T JUST WHISTLIN' *DIXIE*, WERE YA?

NO, BEN.! WE'LL START RIGHT *NOW!*

AND, AS MR. FANTASTIC AND THE GRIM-FACED THING PREPARE FOR A NEW, FATEFUL EXPERIMENT--

WHAT DO I *DO?* HOW CAN I *LIVE*-- WITHOUT *CRYSTAL?*

WHAT IF THE *INHUMANS* DECIDE THAT SHE--*HEY!!*

WHAT'S GOING *ON* DOWN THERE?

MY *FLAME!* IT'S GETTING *WEAK*-- STARTING TO SPUTTER *OUT!*

IT'S NEVER *HAPPENED* LIKE THIS BEFORE!

HAVE TO GRAB A *LEDGE*--*FAST*--WHILE THERE'S STILL *TIME!*

JUST *MADE* IT! BUT-- THAT'S *SUE* DOWN THERE!

SHE'S IN *TROUBLE!* SOMETHING'S *HAPPENING*-- SOMETHING *SERIOUS!*

THAT *GLOWING MASS*--IT'S MOVING SLOWLY *AWAY!*

AND THE *FURTHER* IT GOES--THE STRONGER MY *FLAME* STARTS BURNING!

IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH IT AFFECTS THE *ENERGY* OF EVERY-THING THAT'S *NEAR* IT!

SOME CREEP *I* AM! --SO WRAPPED UP IN MY OWN *SELF-PITY*--

--I *FORGOT* ABOUT THE TROUBLE IN THE *STREET*, BEFORE!

SUE! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S *HAPPENING?*

STAY *BACK*, JOHNNY! IT'S *DANGEROUS!* MY *FORCE FIELD* WILL PROTECT US!

TORCH! FLAME *OFF!* YOU MUSTN'T *HURT* IT!

MUSTN'T *HURT* IT? IS HE *KIDDING?*

THIS THING'S SHAKING UP HALF THE *CITY*, AND *HE* SAYS--

SHAP!

UNNHH!

IT *SOAKED UP* MY BLAST--LIKE A *SPONGE!*

I *COULDN'T* HURT IT--BUT-- IT'S MAKING MY FLAME *DIE OUT* AGAIN!

AND--*WORST* OF ALL --IS WHAT I *SAW*--

THERE'S *SOMEONE*-- OR *SOMETHING*-- *INSIDE* THE GLOWING MASS!

I'M--*FALLING* AGAIN!! AND *THIS* TIME-- NOTHING TO GRAB *ONTO!*

SOMETHING *CUSHIONING* ME--BEFORE I HIT THE *GROUND!*

IT--MUST BE *SUE*--EXTEND-ING HER INVISIBLE *FORCE FIELD!*

SO *THAT'S* HOW SHE KEPT THAT MONSTROSITY AT *BAY!*

JOHNNY! YOU SHOULD HAVE *LISTENED* TO ME!

THANK HEAVEN I WAS *HERE*-- TO BREAK YOUR *FALL!*

DID YOU *NOTICE?* IT DIDN'T *ATTACK* YOUR BROTHER--NOT EVEN WHEN HE WAS *HELP-LESS!*

I *TOLD* YOU WE CAN *REASON* WITH IT!

IF--IT'S *THAT* POWERFUL-- WHEN IT *DOESN'T* ATTACK--

I DON'T WANNA BE AROUND-- WHEN IT *DOES!*

LOOK! IT'S MOVING *FORWARD* AGAIN-- HURLING AN *ENERGY BLAST*--TOWARDS THAT *WAREHOUSE!*

IT STRUCK OUT *BLINDLY!* IT DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS *DOING!*

BUT, IF IT SHOULD STRIKE *ANOTHER* BUILDING-- WITH *PEOPLE* IN IT!

I'VE GOT TO USE MY *FORCE FIELD*-- TO HOLD IT AT *BAY!*

NO, SIS! IT'S TOO *DANGER-OUS!*

I'LL USE MY *FLAME!*

YOU *CAN'T*, JOHNNY! IT'S *IMPERVIOUS* TO FLAME!

ONLY MY *FORCE FIELD* CAN HOLD IT!

THAT'S 'CAUSE IT CAN'T *SEE* THE FIELD--DOESN'T KNOW WHAT IT *IS!*

THE FIGURE *WITHIN*-- I CAN *SEE* IT--MORE *CLEARLY* NOW!

BUT, AS SOON AS IT FINDS *OUT*--!

IT--LOOKS ALMOST *HUMAN!*

HE MEANS US NO *HARM!* I *KNOW* IT!

IT--OR *HE*-- IS GETTING *STRONGER!* CAN'T KEEP UP MY FORCE FIELD-- MUCH *LONGER!*

THE *STRAIN* IS-- *WEAKENING* ME!

IF REED KNEW THE *CHANCE* YOU'RE TAKING--!

REED! OF *COURSE*--*HE'S* THE ONLY ONE WHO'LL KNOW WHAT TO *DO!*

YOU'VE GOT TO BRING HIM *BACK* HERE, JOHNNY!

NO! I'M NOT *LEAVING* YOU, SIS!

YOU *HAVE* TO, JOHNNY-- CAN'T YOU *SEE?*

IF--HE SHATTERS MY *FORCE FIELD*--*ANY-THING* CAN HAPPEN!

HURRY, JOHNNY! PLEASE-- *HURRY!*

OKAY! YOU'VE LEFT ME NO *CHOICE!*

I ONLY *PRAY*--THAT I CAN *HOLD OUT*--UNTIL *REED* GETS HERE!

YOU *MUST*, MRS. RICHARDS! YOUR *HUSBAND* WILL KNOW WHAT TO *DO!*

MY *FLAME* OUGHT TO *WORK* NOW--

--'CAUSE I'M HEADING IN THE *OPPOSITE* DIRECTION!

FLAME ON!

EVERY SECOND *COUNTS!*

HAVE TO GAIN *ALTITUDE*-- SO I CAN SWOOP *DOWN* --FAST!

MEANWHILE, BACK AT REED RICHARDS' LAB--

KNOW SOMETHIN', STRETCH? IF YA EVER GIVE UP *SUPERHEROIN'*, YA'D MAKE A GREAT REPLACEMENT FER *BELA LUGOSI!*

QUIET, BEN! THIS *ARTERIAL CELL* PROTECTION IS TRICKY!

THERE! NOW YOU'RE PREPARED FOR THE MICRO-CHEMICAL *TRANSVERSAL!*

SIT TIGHT AND *DON'T MOVE!* THIS IS THE MOST *CRUCIAL* PHASE!

CAN'TCHA EVER DO *ANYTHIN'* WITHOUT GIVIN' THE *GETTYSBURG ADDRESS* FIRST?

GOOD OLD BEN! HE'S *GRIPING* TO KEEP HIS *NERVE* UP!

I KNOW HOW MUCH THIS *MEANS* TO HIM!

THE NEXT FEW *SECONDS* WILL TELL THE STORY!

IF THIS *WORKS*, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CHANGE FROM THE *THING* TO *BEN GRIMM* --AT *WILL!* YOU'LL NEVER AGAIN--*WHA--?!!*

REED! SUE *NEEDS* YOU-- *NOW!*

I CAN'T LEAVE *BEN!* IF THE EXPERIMENT IS *INTERRUPTED*-- THE SHOCK TO HIS *NERVOUS SYSTEM* WILL MEAN WE CAN NEVER TRY *AGAIN!*

HE MAY NOT EVEN *RECOVER*--FROM THE *WITHDRAWAL!*

BUT YOUR OWN *WIFE*--IS IN DEADLY *DANGER!*

THERE'S SOME KINDA *MONSTER* IN THE STREET! ONLY SUE'S *FORCE FIELD* IS HOLDING IT BACK--AND SHE'S *WEAKENING*--*FAST!*

NEVER MIND *ME!* NO ONE BUT *YOU* CAN *SAVE* HER NOW!

WHAT?!! WHY DID YOU *LEAVE* HER, BOY? SINCE WHEN DOES THE *TORCH* RUN FOR HELP?

EXCEPT FOR MY *SON*--THEY'RE THE *TWO* PEOPLE WHO MEAN THE *MOST* TO ME--IN ALL THE *WORLD!*

AND NOW I'M *CALLED* UPON--TO *SACRIFICE* ONE OF THEM!

HOW CAN I *DO* IT? *HOW?* *HOW??*

NEXT: *THE STARTLING SOLUTION*

FANTASTIC FOUR

15¢ CC | 106 JAN

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Fantastic Four

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

THE THING-- HELPLESS!

THE TORCH-- DOOMED!

EXPOSED AT LAST! THE MONSTER'S SECRET!

THE INVISIBLE GIRL-- POWERLESS

MR. FANTASTIC-- THEIR ONLY HOPE!

MUST THE F.F. LOSE A LIFE BEFORE THEY CAN LEARN--

THE MONSTER'S SECRET!

IF YOU MISSED LAST ISH, THIS'LL BRING YOU UP TO DATE!

ONLY THE GENIUS OF **REED RICHARDS** CAN SAVE HIS DESPERATE WIFE, **SUE**, AS SHE GROWS EVER **WEAKER** WHILE STRAINING HER INVISIBLE **FORCE FIELD** IN AN EFFORT TO STOP THE MYSTERIOUS **MONSTER IN THE STREETS** FROM RAVAGING THE CITY! **BUT**--IF REED LEAVES THE HELPLESS **THING** IN THE MIDDLE OF A FATEFUL **EXPERIMENT**--IT MAY COST **BEN GRIMM**--HIS VERY **LIFE!**

REED! YOUR OWN **WIFE** IS IN DEADLY **DANGER!**

SHE **NEEDS** YOU, MAN! AND SHE NEEDS YOU **NOW!**

BUT-- IF THE EXPERIMENT IS **INTERRUPTED** --AT SUCH A **CRUCIAL** STAGE--

--THE SUDDEN WITH-DRAWAL MAY **KILL** BEN!

AND YET-- I CAN'T FAIL **SUE**--WHEN SHE NEEDS ME THE **MOST!**

A STAN LEE • JOHN ROMITA PRESENTATION!

JOE SINNOTT, *EMBELLISHER*... ARTIE SIMEK, *LETTERER* 4752

JOHNNY! THERE'S JUST ONE CHANCE FOR BEN TO SURVIVE--EVEN IF I LEAVE!

BUT IT DEPENDS ON YOU!

ON ME? WHAT IS IT, REED?

ONLY YOU HAVE THE POWER TO ABSORB ALL HEAT!

ABSORB HEAT? SURE--I CAN DO IT! BUT WHAT--?

USE YOUR HEAD, BOY! I DON'T WANT BEN TO GO INTO SHOCK!

THERE! THAT ADJUSTS THE HUMIDITY LEVEL!

NOW I GET IT!

YOU WANT TO KEEP HIM LIKE THAT--SO NOTHING CHANGES TILL YOUR RETURN!

RIGHT! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO--SO DO IT!

I'M GOING AFTER SUE--BEFORE IT'S--TOO LATE!

THAT MEANS--IT'S UP TO ME!

I KNOW YOU CAN'T HEAR ME, BIG BUDDY--BUT DON'T WORRY! I WON'T FAIL YOU!

I'LL USE MY POWER--LIKE I'VE NEVER USED IT BEFORE!

I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, BEN--I WON'T--I WON'T!

INSTEAD OF *FLAMING ON* --LIKE I *USUALLY* DO--

I'VE GOT TO LET MY OWN BODY *ATTRACT* ALL THE HEAT IN THE ROOM!

NO MATTER HOW *HARD*-- HOW *PAINFUL*-- HOW *IMPOS-SIBLE*--

I'VE GOT TO *ABSORB*--AND TO *HOLD*-- EVERY SINGLE BIT OF *WARMTH*--

--UNTIL IT'S ALL SMOLDERING *WITHIN* ME!

TILL THE ROOM *ITSELF* IS ICY *COLD!*

FASTER! I HAVE TO DO IT *FASTER*-- BEFORE POOR BEN CAN START *WITHDRAWAL!*

BY DRAWING EVERY IOTA OF *HEAT* INTO *MYSELF*--AND LETTING NONE *ESCAPE*-- I'LL MAKE THE ENTIRE *ROOM* LIKE A GIANT *DEEP-FREEZE*--

AND ONLY *THAT*--CAN *SAVE* BEN GRIMM!

IT'S *WORKING!* BUT--IT'S STILL TOO *SLOW!*

I THOUGHT I SAW HIM START--TO *MOVE!*

HOLD *ON,* BEN--*HOLD ON!!* JUST A FEW SECONDS *LONGER!*

IF ONLY--REED HADN'T PICKED A TIME LIKE *THIS*--TO TRY TO TURN BEN--BACK TO *NORMAL!*

BUT--WE CAN'T BLAME *HIM!*

HOW COULD HE *KNOW?* HOW COULD *ANYONE* HAVE KNOWN--

--THAT A *MONSTER* WOULD INVADE THE STREETS??

--THAT HE'D BE *NEEDED* --*NOW?*

THE *FREEZING PROCESS* IS SPEEDING UP NOW!

IF ONLY--I CAN MAINTAIN THE *PRESSURE*--

IF ONLY--I CAN--STAND THE *STRAIN!*

BUT I *MUST* STAND IT! I *MUST!* BEN'S VERY *LIFE*--IS IN THE *BALANCE!*

IT--IT'S *OVER!* HE'S FROZEN *SOLID!* THE ENTIRE *ROOM* IS LIKE A CAKE OF *ICE!*

NOW--I'VE GOT TO *LEAVE*--IN A MATTER OF *SECONDS!*

MY BODY MUST--*RELEASE* THE THROBBING *HEAT!*

BUT--NOT *HERE!*

IT--*CAN'T* BE--*HERE!*

THERE'S SO MUCH HEAT *WITHIN* ME-- I ALMOST-- CAN'T *CONTAIN* IT!

WHOOOSH!

BUT I MUST GO *HIGHER-- HIGHER!*

IT'S--TOO *DANGEROUS--* DOWN HERE!

I COULD *IGNITE* --THE ENTIRE *CITY!*

I'M--*HIGH* ENOUGH-- AT *LAST!*

ANOTHER *SECOND*-- MIGHT HAVE BEEN-- *TOO LATE!*

THE *SHOCK*-- TO MY SYSTEM-- GOING FROM *HEAT*--TO *COLD*-- TO *HEAT*-- IS--IS--

TOO MUCH!

I'M-- *BLACKING OUT!* CAN'T --KEEP MYSELF-- *ALOFT!*

AT THAT MOMENT, ANOTHER CRISIS IS ALSO AT HAND--

MRS. RICHARDS! HE--HE'S COMING CLOSER!

I KNOW! HIS OWN NATURAL POWER IS DRAINING MY FORCE FIELD!

I CAN'T-- HOLD ON-- ANY LONGER!

BUT YOU MUST--YOU MUST! EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON IT!

IF ONLY--REED--WERE HERE! WHY HASN'T HE COME? WHY?

HE'S-- NEVER FAILED ME-- BEFORE!

MY--FORCE FIELD --FADING! IT'S NO USE!

NO! NO!

I'M SORRY-- PROFESSOR! I TRIED! I--TRIED-- MY BEST!

REED--MY DARLING... ONLY YOU--COULD HAVE-- SAVED US!

BUT NOW--IT'S TOO LATE! TOO LATE--FOR ANYTHING...

STAY BACK! YOU MUST--STAY BACK!

DON'T--DON'T UNLEASH YOUR DEADLY BLAST!

NO ONE --IS TRYING TO-- HURT YOU!

STOP! DON'T DO IT! DON'T!

BUT, JUST AS THE FATEFUL BOLT IS UNLEASHED, A FANTASTIC, BLUE-GARBED FIGURE HURLS HIMSELF BETWEEN THE MONSTER AND HIS INTENDED VICTIMS... LETTING HIS OWN FLEXIBLE BODY ABSORB THE STAGGERING IMPACT--!

REED RICHARDS!

UNNHH!

IF I HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO STRETCH--TO LET MY BODY'S ELASTICITY BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE BLAST--I'D BE FINISHED!

THOOM!

I'LL GET YOU BOTH AWAY--FAST!

A SECOND SUCH BLAST COULD FINISH US ALL!

BUT, SUE--WHAT'S WRONG WITH SUE?!?

IF--ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO HER--!!

SHE'S ALL RIGHT! THE STRAIN OF HOLDING HIM AT BAY JUST WEAKENED HER!

HOLDING WHOM AT BAY? WHAT'S INSIDE THAT GLOWING MASS OF ENERGY?

THAT'S JUST IT! I DON'T KNOW! NO ONE KNOWS!

THE PROFESSOR THOUGHT--IT MIGHT BE FROM ANOTHER PLANET--TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH US!

YES--YES! THAT'S WHY--WE MUST NOT HARM IT!

YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HARMING THAT?

IT COULD DESTROY THE CITY IF IT ISN'T STOPPED!

POWER LIKE THAT CAN'T RUN AMOK UNCHECKED!

BLAM

GET OFF THE STREET! TAKE COVER--ALL OF YOU!

WHA--?!! I DIDN'T SEE THAT CHUNK OF *GRANITE*-- FALLING TOWARDS ME!

IF--IF NOT FOR *YOU*--!!

THUMM!

NO TIME TO *TALK!* KEEP THE *CROWDS* BACK! LEAVE THIS TO THE *FANTASTIC FOUR!*

YOU DON'T HAVETA ASK ME *TWICE!*

IT'S MOVING *AIMLESSLY*--AS IF WITHOUT ANY *PURPOSE!*

BUT ITS *POWER* IS-- BEYOND *BELIEF!*

I CAN *SEE* WHY THE *TORCH* COULDN'T HANDLE IT!

SSSSHH

OOSH

LET *ME* TRY TO REASON WITH HIM! HE'LL *LISTEN* TO ME--I *KNOW* IT!

DON'T BE A *FOOL,* PROFESSOR! WE DON'T YET KNOW WHO-- OR *WHAT* WE'RE DEALING WITH!

BUT HE MUSTN'T BE *HARMED,* DON'T YOU SEE? *HE MUSTN'T BE HARMED!*

I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR *YEARS* --*WORKED* WITH YOU IN THE PAST!

YOU WOULDN'T BE SO *AGITATED*--UNLESS YOU *KNEW* SOMETHING-- SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT *TELLING!*

YOU *KNOW* WHO THE MONSTER *IS!*

I DON'T! I *DON'T!* YOU'VE GOT IT ALL *WRONG,* RICHARDS! HOW COULD I *POSSIBLY*--??

AS A *SCIEN-TIST* YOU'RE THE *TOPS,* RAMBOW! BUT AS A *LIAR* --YOU'RE A *WASHOUT,* HEAR?

I CAN SEE RIGHT *THRU* YOU!

THERE'S TOO MUCH AT *STAKE* FOR YOU TO *HIDE* ANYTHING--

SO *TALK,* MISTER-- *TALK!*

ALL RIGHT! I'LL TELL-- I'LL *TELL!*

I--I *CAN'T* KEEP IT BOTTLED UP *INSIDE* OF ME ANY *LONGER!*

YOUR SO-CALLED *MONSTER* IS-- HEAVEN HELP MY SOUL-- HE IS--

MY SON!

GO *ON,* PHILLIP-- KEEP *TALKING!* THE MORE WE *KNOW,* THE MORE WE CAN *HELP!*

YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE SERVED TOGETHER--ON *ANTI-WAR* COMMITTEES?

THAT'S HOW IT *STARTED*-- BECAUSE OF MY HATRED OF *WAR*--

--BECAUSE I HAD SWORN TO DEDICATE MY *LIFE*--TO THE CAUSE OF *PEACE!*

LARRY WAS *HELPING* ME --AT THE UNIVERSITY *LAB!*

I WAS SEEKING TO DEVELOP A DEVICE THAT WOULD *NEUTRALIZE* ANY WEAPON--A DEVICE THAT WOULD MAKE WAR *IMPOSSIBLE!*

AND THEN AT LAST-- THE FINAL *TEST*--

IF ANYTHING GOES *WRONG* --THE ARMORED *SUIT* YOU'RE WEARING WILL *PROTECT* YOU, SON!

IT'S OKAY, DAD! *I'M* NOT WORRIED!

IF THERE'S THE SMALLEST *CHANCE* OF US PUTTING AN END TO *WAR*--IT'S WORTH *ANY* RISK!

I'VE TESTED MY EQUATIONS A *THOUSAND* TIMES --BUT I'M *STILL* UNCERTAIN!

THE PRINCIPLES ARE SO *NEW* --SO *UNTRIED* --*ANYTHING* CAN HAPPEN!

I'LL BE OKAY, DAD--ESPECIALLY IN THIS *SUIT* YOU MADE FOR ME!

IT'S LIKE WEARING A PORTABLE *BOMB-SHELTER!*

THEN *BRACE* YOURSELF, LARRY! HERE *GOES--!*

CLICK!

"I SET THE ENERGY LEVEL TO THE PRESCRIBED READING--THEN SLOWLY, STEADILY, I INCREASED THE POWER! EVERYTHING WENT PERFECTLY, UNTIL--"

AN OXYGEN LEAK WITHIN THE CHAMBER!

IF IT IGNITES THE ATOMIC--OH NO! NOOOO!

LARRY!

DAD! SOMETHING'S WRONG! DAD!

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO ME! I KNOW IT--I CAN FEEL IT! DAD!

FF FZZZZ ZZZZZZ

"WHEN THE SMOKE HAD CLEARED, THE WALLS HAD COLLAPSED! THE LAB WAS A SHAMBLES, AND--LARRY WAS GONE!"

IT'S--ALMOST AS THOUGH--HE SMASHED THRU THE WALL--HIMSELF!

--AS THOUGH ALL OF THE POWER TO BE UTILIZED IN THE EXPERIMENT--

--HAS BEEN ABSORBED INTO THE BODY OF--MY SON!

I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO ADMIT IT! I THOUGHT I COULD FIND HIM--BRING HIM BACK--AND MAKE HIM NORMAL AGAIN!

I NEVER DREAMED IT WOULD BE--LIKE THIS!

GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, PHILLIP! YOU DON'T HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE ANY MORE!

BUT HE'S SO DANGEROUS, REED! HOW CAN WE STOP HIM--WITHOUT HARMING HIM?

I'M NOT EVEN SURE HE CAN BE STOPPED!

IF WE CAN'T FIND THE ANSWER--THE TROOPS WILL COME! THEY'LL USE EVERY WEAPON AT THEIR COMMAND!

SOONER OR LATER--MY SON WILL BE KILLED!

NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!

NOW HERE'S WHAT WE'VE GOT TO DO--!

ALL RIGHT, THE STREET'S BEEN *CLEARED!*

KEEP THE *FIRES* UNDER CONTROL UNTIL THE HEAVY *MORTARS* GET HERE!

HEAR *THAT?* THEY'VE SENT FOR THEIR DEADLIEST *ARTILLERY!*

LARRY WON'T HAVE A *CHANCE!*

LOOK! THERE-- IN THE *SKY!* WHAT'S THAT *FALLING?*

IT'S-- A *BODY!*

POLICE

THE RUSH OF *AIR*--IS KEEPING ME *CONSCIOUS!*

BUT I CAN'T *FLAME ON!*

I CAN'T *FLAME ON!*

IT'S *JOHNNY!!* HE'S *FALLING!*

IF THE *FALL* DOESN'T GET HIM--RAMBOW'S *SON* WILL!

AND MY *FORCE FIELD* IS STILL TOO *WEAK* TO SAVE HIM!

OH *NO! NO!*

HE HURLS HIS *BLASTS* AT ANY-THING THAT *MOVES!*

LARRY! WHY CAN'T YOU *HEAR* ME?

WHY CAN'T YOU *UNDER-STAND?*

I'VE GOT TO ATTRACT THE MONSTER'S *ATTENTION!*

MUST MAKE HIM ATTACK *ME*--AND NOT THE *TORCH!*

IT'S *WORKING* --BUT THERE'S STILL JOHNNY'S *PLUNGE!*

FLAME ON, SON! FLAME ON! WHILE THERE'S STILL *TIME!*

I *CAN'T!* I *CAN'T!* NO MATTER HOW I *TRY!*

MY FLAME'S TOO *WEAK*-- IT WON'T --*SUPPORT* ME.!

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TRY *HARDER, JOHNNY-- HARDER! DON'T LET US DOWN!*

LET *THEM* DOWN? WHAT ABOUT *ME?*

NO! HE'S *RIGHT!* WE'RE A *TEAM*-- THEY *NEED* ME! I'VE *GOT* TO MAKE IT!

GOT TO! *GOT* TO! *GOT* TO!

THEN, A SCANT SPLIT-SECOND LATER--

LIKE-- REED ALWAYS *SAYS*--

--IT'S *NEVER*-- HOPE-LESS!

--NOT JUST--FOR *MYSELF!!*

13

THANKS, REED! IF YOU HADN'T KEPT HIM FROM BLASTING ME--

AND THEN SHOUTED AT ME THAT WAY--!

STOW IT, KID! KEEP YOUR DISTANCE! HE'S STILL DANGEROUS!

LOOK! HE STOPPED MOVING!

MAYBE--HE'S STARTING TO UNDER-STAND!

MAYBE WE'RE REACHING HIM!

I HOPE SO, DOCTOR--BUT WE CAN'T-- TORCH!

IT'S OKAY--

I TOLD YOU TO STAY BACK!

I'LL START FLAMING OFF--

SO MY BLAZING BODY WON'T ATTRACT HIM!

HOW'S BEN? DID YOU DO AS I SAID?

IT WORKED REAL GOOD, REED! HE'S LIKE A SOLID BLOCK OF ICE!

ALL RIGHT! THEN THAT LEAVES ME FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON RAMBOW'S SON!

YOU SAID YOU HAD AN IDEA BEFORE--!

RIGHT! YOU'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT LARRY, THAT YOU FORGOT SOMETHING!

REMEMBER WHEN WE USED TO WORK ON EXPERIMENTS TOGETHER? WE'D NEVER TRY ANYTHING DANGEROUS WITHOUT SOME SORT OF FAIL-SAFE DEVICE!

YOU MUST HAVE SOME SUCH DEVICE IN YOUR LAB RIGHT NOW!

OF COURSE I DO!

WHY-- WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT?

BUT-- HOW CAN I REACH MY LAB FAST ENOUGH? IF I-- OH!

IF IT'S SPEED YOU'RE AFTER-- HANG IN THERE, MAN!

EVERY SECOND COUNTS, JOHNNY!

I'LL GET THE POLICE TO HOLD OFF TILL YOU RETURN!

DON'T *WORRY*, DOC--I'LL LET MY *RIGHT ARM* KEEP ITS COOL--SO YOU WON'T GET *SCORCHED!*

DOWN *BELOW* US--THE *BAXTER BUILDING!*

WHAT *HAPPENED* TO IT?

I HAD TO *ICE* IT UP--BY DRAINING OUT EVERY IOTA OF *HEAT!*

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE *BEN*--'CAUSE REED WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF TRYING TO CHANGE HIM BACK TO *NORMAL!*

HE HAD TO BE *FROZEN*--SO THE *SHOCK* WOULDN'T KILL HIM!

MEANWHILE--

REED! THE MONSTER'S STARTING TO *MOVE* AGAIN!

IT'S *TOO SOON!* WE HAVE TO *CONTAIN* HIM TILL *DR. RAMBOW* RETURNS!

IF HE STRIKES OUT *AGAIN*, THE *POLICE* WILL ATTACK!

REED--WAIT! NOT EVEN *YOU* CAN HOLD HIM BACK--*ALONE!*

I *HAVE* TO, DARLING! WE'VE NO OTHER *CHOICE!*

IF *I* DON'T STOP HIM--EVEN THE *POLICE* MAY FAIL!

SINCE HIS ENERGY *FEEDS* ON ITSELF--HE'LL JUST KEEP GETTING *STRONGER!*

IF I *WRAP* MYSELF AROUND HIM-- HE WON'T BE ABLE TO *SEE!* IT MAY *CONFUSE* HIM!

ALL I HAVE TO *DO* IS KEEP HIM FROM *BLASTING AWAY* FOR ANOTHER FEW MINUTES!

ZORK!

CAN'T--*TAKE* THIS--MUCH *LONGER!*

BUT--I *CAN'T* LET HIM BREAK *FREE!*

WAIT! THERE AT THE *CORNER*-- AN *ARMORY!*

IF I CAN TRICK HIM *INTO* IT--

--THE HEAVY, CEMENT *WALLS* MAY PROVIDE ENOUGH *PROTEC-TION--!!*

NOW--I HAVE TO EXERT--THE MOST *DELICATE* PHYSICAL CONTROL!

HAVE TO *STRETCH* MY BODY--JUST ENOUGH--TO GIVE HIM AN *OPENING*-- POINTED AT THE *DOOR!*

FOOM

I *DID* IT! HIS BLAST *BROKE THRU!!*

AND *NOW*--

ALL I HAVE TO HOPE IS--

EVEN IF HE BREAKS *FREE* OF ME--THE ARMORY WILL BE *STRONG* ENOUGH TO *CONTAIN* HIM--UNTIL THE *TORCH* RETURNS!

I CAN'T LEAVE REED IN THERE *ALONE* WITH--WITH--*WHATEVER* IT IS HE'S FIGHTING!

I CAN'T STAY OUT HERE *ALONE*--NOT *KNOWING!*

REED! REED! ARE YOU *ALL RIGHT?* WHAT'S *HAPPENING* IN THERE?

IT'S SO *SILENT!* WHY--DOESN'T HE *SAY* SOME-THING?

SUE! I--I *HELD* HIM--AS LONG AS--I *COULD!*

NOW--EVERY-THING DEPENDS ON--*JOHNNY* GETTING HERE--IN TIME!

WHERE'S *REED?* --THE *ARMORY!* MAYBE HE'S IN *THERE!*

LISTEN, DARLING! IT'S *HIM!* HE *MADE* IT!

QUICK--TAKE A LOOK! DOES HE HAVE --THE *EQUIPMENT?*

YES! THEY'RE *CARRYING* SOMETHING! IT MUST BE WHAT YOU *WANT!*

WHAT *HAPPENED?* WHERE'S MY *SON?*

FROM THE *LOOKS* OF THINGS, *REED'S* THE ONE WE SHOULD BE *WORRIED* ABOUT!

IS--THE *NEUTRALIZER*-- ALL SET UP?

YES, DEAR! EVERYTHING IS *READY* FOR YOU!

LOOK! HE'S *KNEELING*-- COVERING HIS *EYES*--AS IF HE *KNOWS!*

--AS IF HE *REALIZES* WE'RE TRYING TO *HELP!*

OR--HE COULD JUST BE GATHERING HIS *STRENGTH* --TO HURL SOME BIGGER *BLASTS!*

THE TORCH IS *RIGHT!* WE DARE DELAY *NO LONGER!*

IF ONLY MY HANDS --WEREN'T *TREMBLING* SO!

I'VE GOT TO DO IT--*NOT* YOU!

HE'S YOUR OWN *SON*--YOU'LL BE TOO *NERVOUS*--

IF THE DEVICE IS INCORRECTLY *SET*--*ANYTHING* CAN HAPPEN!

BUT--YOU'RE SO *WEAK!* YOU'VE BEEN *HURT!*

STAY BACK! THE *F.F.* CAN *HANDLE* IT!

TRUST US-- JUST A FEW MINUTES *MORE!*

YOU'VE NEVER *SEEN* IT BEFORE, AND YET--YOU'RE SETTING IT FAR MORE *PRECISELY* THAN I COULD EVER *HOPE* TO DO!

YOUR REPUTATION DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN TO DO YOU *JUSTICE!*

IT'S *GOT* TO BE RIGHT --THE *FIRST* TIME!

THERE WON'T BE--A *SECOND CHANCE!*

BUT--EVERY-THING'S SPINNING AROUND--

REED! REED! DR. RAMBOW-- HE'S *COLLAPSED!*

DID REED HAVE TIME TO *SET* IT RIGHT?

THEN FATE LEAVES ME *NO* CHOICE! I *MUST* USE THE DEVICE-- *MYSELF!*

LET US ALL *PRAY*-- THAT HE *DID!*

IT WAS ALL *MY* FAULT--ONLY *MINE!* I TRIED TO BRING *PEACE* TO THE WORLD--BUT IN MY ARROGANCE--MY *IGNORANCE*-- I TRIED THE *WRONG* WAY--

I SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* YOU CAN'T END WAR--AND VIOLENCE--WITH A *WEAPON!*

THE ANSWER TO *POWER* CAN NEVER BE--*MORE* POWER!

BUT AT LEAST YOU *TRIED!*

THAT'S ALL *ANY* MAN CAN DO!

I NEARLY *SACRIFICED* MY OWN *SON*-- ON THE ALTAR OF MY FAITH IN *TECHNOLOGY!*

DOCTOR--LOOK OUT! THE MACHINE HAD A *FEED BACK!* THE RAYS ARE *HITTING* YOU!

THAT DOESN'T *MATTER! NOTHING* MATTERS-- EXCEPT-- SAVING MY *BOY!*

IT'S *WORKING!* REED SET IT *RIGHT!* LOOK-- *LOOK!*

I FEEL--AS THOUGH I'VE JUST *AWAKENED*--FROM SOME TERRIBLE *NIGHTMARE!*

DR. RAMBOW!

IT'S *OVER!* THANK GOD-- IT'S *OVER* --AT LAST!

DAD! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT *HAPPENED?*

YOUR FATHER'S A *BRAVE* MAN, SON! HE HAD A *VISION*--A DREAM OF *WORLD PEACE*--

AND HE DARED TRY TO MAKE IT COME *TRUE!*

BETTER SEND FOR AN *AMBULANCE*, JOHNNY!

STAY THERE, LARRY-- TILL WE CHECK YOU OUT!

FINALLY--

YOU'RE EVERYTHING MY FATHER *SAID* YOU WERE, MR. RICHARDS!

I'LL NEVER *FORGET* YOU!

TAKE *CARE* OF HIM, LARRY! THE WORLD *NEEDS* MEN OF PEACE-- IN THIS TIME OF *MADNESS!*

REED! I--I JUST *REMEMBERED*--

WHAT ABOUT *BEN?* THE DEEP-FREEZE MUST BE *THAWING* BY NOW!

THEN, SECONDS LATER--

JOHNNY WAS *RIGHT!*

EVERY-THING'S STARTING TO *MELT!*

WHAT IF-- WE'RE *TOO LATE?*

IF ANYTHING *HAPPENS* TO THAT BIG, BLUE-EYED HUNK OF HAMFAT--!

IT *WON'T,* JOHNNY! IT *CAN'T!* WE MUSTN'T EVEN *THINK* OF IT!

THERE'S *STILL* ENOUGH FROST--YOU CAN TELL BY THE *WALLS!*

HE'S JUST AS YOU *LEFT* HIM, JOHNNY!

SO WE'VE CLEARED OUR *FIRST* HURDLE!

BUT, THE SOUND OF YOUR *VOICE*--YOU STILL SEEM SO *WORRIED*--

WHAT *IS* IT, DARLING? WHAT *ELSE* CAN GO WRONG?

THE *DEADLIEST* QUESTION OF ALL--

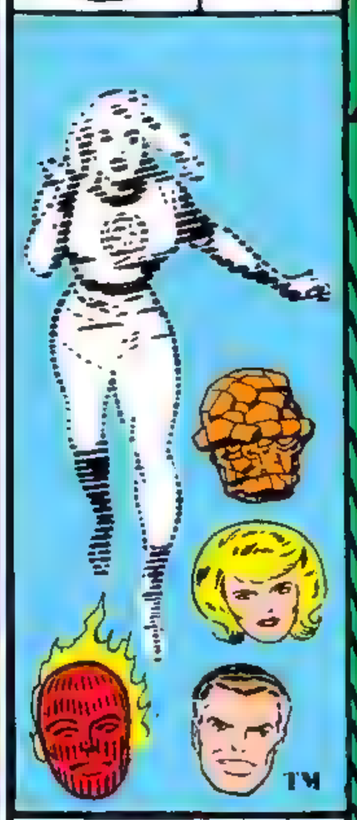
CAN HE *SURVIVE*-- THE FINAL *CHANGE?*

NEXT

A TIME FOR TRAGEDY!

FANTASTIC FOUR

15¢ | 107 FEB



MARVEL COMICS GROUP

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

AND NOW.. THE THING

IT MUST HAPPEN! IT MUST.. IT MUST!

ALSO, THE SENSATIONAL CLUE TO: THE MYSTERY OF JANUS!

FROM A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT, THE F.F. FIND TRAGEDY AND TERROR!

AND NOW... THE THING!

WRITTEN and ILLUSTRATED BY
STAN LEE and JOHN BUSCEMA
JOE SINNOTT INKER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER

IN THE MIDDLE OF A CRUCIAL EXPERIMENT, ATTEMPTING TO TURN THE SUPER-POWERED THING BACK TO NORMAL, REED RICHARDS WAS FORCED TO FREEZE HIS SUBJECT WHILE ANOTHER CRISIS TOOK PLACE. ("THE MONSTER'S SECRET", LAST ISH!) BUT NOW, BACK IN HIS LAB AT LAST--

I'VE GOT TO KNOW--CAN BEN SURVIVE THE FINAL CHANGE?

YOU MEAN-- IF THE EXPERIMENT FAILS--

--POOR BEN WILL PAY FOR IT--WITH HIS LIFE?!!

FEATURING, ONCE MORE, THE DREADED
NEGATIVE ZONE!

REED! CAN'T YOU STOP NOW--WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME?

NO, DARLING--I'VE GONE TOO FAR! THERE'S NO TIME LEFT!

THEN THIS IS THE PAYOFF-- FOR BEN!

WE DARE NOT DELAY ANY LONGER!

QUICKLY, SUE--I NEED YOUR PROTECTIVE FORCE FIELD AROUND ME--

IN CASE AN ENERGY FEEDBACK SHOULD CAUSE A SHORT CIRCUIT!

JOHNNY! STAND READY TO FLAME ON!

I--DIDN'T REALIZE-- IT WOULD BE THIS DANGEROUS!

WHY, REED? HOW CAN MY FLAME HELP YOU NOW?

KLACK!

QUIET! I MUST CONCEN-TRATE!

I'LL EXPLAIN LATER!

THEN, FINALLY--

ALL SYSTEMS ARE SET! THE ICE IS MELTING!

GET READY, TORCH! THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN!

NOW! USE YOUR FLAME TO EVAPORATE THE WATER!

NOTHING WET MUST TOUCH ANY LIVE WIRES!

I--CAN'T SEE--THRU THE STEAM!

FASTER, JOHNNY-- FASTER! IF IT TAKES TOO LONG, BEN'S HAD IT!

I READ YA, BOSS MAN!

MORE FLAME! USE MORE FLAME!

THAT'S *IT!* *THAT'S* WHAT WE NEEDED!

THE STEAM IS *CLEARING!* I CAN *SEE* AGAIN!

BUT *BEN*-- WHAT ABOUT *BEN?*

ZZZZZZZZZ

WE WON'T *KNOW* FOR ANOTHER FEW SECONDS!

NOT TILL THE *ICE* IS ALL GONE!

THERE! THAT'S THE *LAST* OF IT!

YOU CAN DROP YOUR *FORCE FIELD* NOW, HONEY!

BUT--BEN LOOKS THE *SAME!* HE HASN'T--EVEN *MOVED!*

YOU-- YOU *FAILED* HIM!

IF HE--DOESN'T *RECOVER*--IT'LL BE THE SAME AS IF--AS IF YOU *KILLED* HIM, REED!

GET *HOLD* OF YOURSELF, KID! DON'T COUNT *EITHER* OF US OUT YET!

SO FAR, IT'S ALL GOING ACCORDING TO *PLAN!*

--AND *THIS* IS WHERE IT ALL *PAYS OFF!*

KLIK

LOOK! HE-- HE'S MOVING! I CAN SEE HIM--STARTING TO BREATHE!

MORE THAN THAT! HIS FACE--IT'S CHANGING!

HIS BODY, TOO! THE SCALES ARE FADING! HE'S-- HE'S BECOMING-- NORMAL!!

HE'S--NO LONGER-- THE THING!

I'M BEN GRIMM AGAIN!

THE REAL BEN GRIMM!

CONGRATULATIONS, OL' BUDDY!

REED DID IT THIS TIME! HE REALLY DID IT!

BUT, WILL IT LAST? I REMEMBER-- THOSE OTHER TIMES--

WELL, THERE IS ONE THING I HAVE TO TELL YOU--

I KNEW IT! THERE HADDA BE A KICKER SOMEWHERE!

OKAY, STRETCH-- LAY IT ON ME!

DON'T WORRY-- I CAN TAKE IT! I BEEN DIS-APPOINTED BEFORE!

BUT THIS IS SOMETHING YOU DON'T EXPECT--!

THIS TIME I'VE SUCCEEDED BEYOND OUR WILDEST HOPES!

THIS TIME THE CHANGE IS PERMANENT! AND, EVEN MORE--

YOU HAVEN'T LOST YOUR SUPER-POWER!

YOU CAN BECOME THE THING AGAIN-- ANY TIME YOU WANT TO--JUST BY WILLING IT!

YA MEAN-- NOW I'M REALLY THE SAME AS ALL OF YOU?

THAT'S THE SIZE OF IT, OLD FRIEND!

AND NOW--PROVE IT TO YOURSELF! GO ON--CONCENTRATE--

YOU CAN DO IT, BEN--JUST TRY! TELL YOURSELF-- MAKE YOURSELF BECOME--THE THING!

OKAY! OKAY! I'M TRYIN'! DON'T PUSH ME, MAN!

I JUST GOTTA BELIEVE IN IT-- THAT'S ALL!

AND THEN, SECONDS LATER--

MY HANDS!! LOOK AT 'EM! LOOK AT MY HANDS!

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM, REED?

SHUT UP, KID!

STAY WITH IT, BEN! STAY WITH IT!

YA MADE IT SOUND-- SO EASY!

NOTHING'S EASY! I NEVER SAID IT WAS!

BUT I NEVER EXPECTED YOU TO BE A QUITTER!

INSTEAD OF FEELING SORRY FOR YOURSELF, BIG MAN--MAKE IT WORK! MAKE IT WORK!

BLAST YOU, RICHARDS! BLAST YOU! BLAST YOU! BLAST YOU!

THAT'S *IT!* THAT'S *IT!* THE *MADDER* HE GETS, THE *BETTER* IT IS! *LOOK* AT HIM--*LOOK!*

REED WAS *RIGHT!*

IT *WORKED!* IT *WORKED!*

AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CHANGE *BACK* TO NORMAL ANY TIME YOU *WANT* TO!

EACH TIME YOU *DO* IT, IT'LL BECOME THAT MUCH *EASIER!*

NORMAL? HOW DO I KNOW *WHICH* O' ME IS THE *NORMAL* ONE?

BENJAMIN? ARE YOU *HERE,* DEAR?

I CAME OVER AS *FAST* AS I COULD!

SUE CALLED ME! SHE TOLD ME--SOMETHING *WONDERFUL* IS HAPPENING!

ALICIA DOLL! *WOW,* AM I EVER GLAD TA SEE *YOU,* BABY!

I GOTTA *SURPRISE* FOR YA THAT'S GONNA *TICKLE* YER TOENAILS 'N TANGLE YER *TONSILS!*

OH, *BEN!* I NEVER HEARD YOU SOUND SO *HAPPY!*

BUT *FIRST,* I GOTTA GRAB ME SOME NEW *THREADS!*

I WAS *HOPING* YOU'D SAY THAT!

HERE--I DESIGNED THESE *ELASTICIZED* ITEMS SPECIALLY *FOR* YOU!

NUTS! HOW CAN YA STAY *MAD* AT A JOKER LIKE THAT?

REED WOULDN'T GIVE BEN *ELASTICIZED* CLOTHES UNLESS-- HE EXPECTED HIM TO REVERT TO HIS *NORMAL* SIZE!

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL IT BE, UNTIL--?

NOT ANOTHER SECOND, BABY!

C'MERE, FLUFF-STUFF, 'N LEMME PUT MY ARMS AROUND YA!

DON'T EVER-- EVER-- LEMME HEAR YA SAY THAT AGAIN!

BEN, WAIT! I WANT TO RUN SOME MORE TESTS ON YOU!

NOW C'MON, GORGEOUS--WE GOT US SOME CELEBRATIN' TA DO!

TELL 'IM NOT TA HOLD HIS BREATH TILL WE GIT BACK, BABY!

--ONLY THIS TIME I WON'T BE SCARED'A SQUEEZIN' YOU TA DEATH!

OH, BEN! OH, MY DARLING--YOU-- YOU'RE NOT THE THING ANYMORE!

DO YA KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US, HONEY?

I'M AFRAID TO THINK OF IT!

PERHAPS THE THING-- COULD LOVE A BLIND GIRL! BUT NOW--

I DON'T BLAME HIM FOR RUSHING OFF-- BUT I HOPE THERE'LL BE NO SIDE EFFECTS!

WHAT IS IT, JOHNNY? WHAT'S WRONG?

I DUNNO! I GUESS-- SEEING BEN AND ALICIA LIKE THAT-- MADE ME THINK OF CRYSTAL!

NO MATTER HOW I TRY TO STOP THINK-ING OF HER--I CAN'T! I JUST CAN'T!

WHAT IF I NEVER SEE HER AGAIN? WHAT IF--SHE'S GONE FOREVER?

AND--NOT A SINGLE WORD FROM HER--SINCE SHE REJOINED THE INHUMANS!

HOW AM I GONNA LIVE-- WITHOUT HER?

SURE--MY BIG-BRAINED BROTHER-IN-LAW CAN SOLVE EVERYONE ELSE'S PROBLEMS--

BUT NOT EVEN A MILLION FANTASTIC FOURS COULD STOP JOHNNY STORM FROM LOSING THE GIRL HE LOVES!

NO, JOHNNY! WAIT!

WAIT.? I'M THRU WAITING! THAT'S ALL I EVER DID-- 'CAUSE I WAS THE YOUNGEST OF THE TEAM!

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN "WAIT TILL YOU'RE OLDER, JOHNNY! WAIT TILL YOU KNOW BETTER, JOHNNY!"

AND I LISTENED --'CAUSE WHAT ELSE COULD I DO?

SUE WAS MY OWN SISTER!

AND REED --HE WAS ALWAYS THE BRAIN-- ALWAYS THE BOSS!

EVEN BEN KEPT PUTTIN' ME DOWN! NONE OF 'EM--EVER TOOK ME SERIOUSLY!

I'LL ALWAYS BE THE KID TO THEM! NO ONE HAS TO WORRY ABOUT ME--I'M YOUNG--THE KID CAN WAIT!

BUT SUE AND REED HAVE EACH OTHER--AND BEN HAS ALICIA! I'M THE ONLY ONE--ALONE!

REED, I'M WORRIED ABOUT JOHNNY!

TELL ME ABOUT IT LATER, SUE! I'VE WORK TO DO!

IN FACT, WHY DON'T YOU VISIT AGATHA HARKNESS, AND SEE HOW OUR SON IS DOING?

I HAD EVERY INTENTION OF SEEING LITTLE FRANKLIN--

BUT YOU'RE TRYING TO GET RID OF ME-- AND I WANT TO KNOW WHY!

PLEASE DEAR--DON'T GO FEMININE ON ME JUST NOW! I HAVEN'T THE TIME--OR THE PATIENCE!

CAN'T YOU SEE I'M INVOLVED IN SOMETHING IMPORTANT?

HE'S NEVER SPOKEN TO ME THAT WAY BEFORE!

AND HE'LL HAVE A LOT OF APOLOGIZ-ING TO DO WHEN I RETURN!

I WON'T BE SNAPPED AT THAT WAY--BY ANYONE!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S BEEN *HAPPENING* TO US LATELY!

WE *ALL* SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN *BAD TEMPERED*--IRRITABLE --FOR NO APPARENT *REASON!*

MAYBE IT'S TOO MUCH *TOGETHERNESS!*

PERHAPS WE'D *ALL* BE BETTER OFF IF WE HAD A *SEPARATION* FOR AWHILE!

AND YET--EVEN THE *THOUGHT* OF BEING WITHOUT *REED*-- IS MORE THAN I CAN *BEAR!*

SO I CAN IMAGINE HOW POOR *JOHNNY* FEELS--WITH *CRYSTAL* GONE!

BUT HE'S STILL *YOUNG!* HE'LL GET *OVER* IT SOONER OR LATER!

*IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THE **ACTION** STARTS--WE **PROMISE** YOU! BUT WE THINK YOU'LL GET A **KICK** OUT OF THIS **NEXT** LITTLE TABLEAU--*

IMAGINE--RIDING THE SUBWAY WITH NO ONE *STARING* AT YOU, BEN!

YEAH, BUT IT'S *DULLER* THAN I FIGGERED!

LET'S LIVEN THINGS *UP* A LITTLE!

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN,* BEN?

BEN!!

HAW! TAKE IT *EASY,* BABY! I WUZ JUST *PRACTICIN'!*

BESIDES, I LIKE TA WATCH THE *RUBES* WHEN THEY SUDDENLY GIT A *SQUINT* AT ME!

TH-THE *THING*-- R-RIGHT AT MY *ELBOW!!*

YA'D THINK THEY NEVER SEEN A ORANGE-SKINNED *SWINGER* BEFORE! HYUK! HYUK!

LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT!

HELP! THERE'S A HORRIBLE MONSTER INSIDE THE CAR!

MOVE IT! HURRY! DON'T LET 'IM GET ME!

KEEP GOING, HEAR? DON'T STOP FOR ANY-THING!

HEY! WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

I DON'T GET IT! THERE'S NOTHIN' HERE!

WHAT WAS IT SCARED EVERYONE THAT WAY?

MEBBE SOMEONE FERGOT TA USE THE MOUTHWASH FER LOVERS!

BEN, I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

I'VE NEVER KNOWN YOU TO ACT THAT WAY BEFORE!

ALMOST AS THOUGH YOU ENJOY UPSETTING PEOPLE!

THEY'LL GIT OVER IT--'N WE HAD A FEW LAUGHS!

HEY! WHAT'S THAT?

WE GOT THE STUFF! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!

HOLD IT! THERE'S SOMEONE PASSIN' BY!

WE DON'T WANT ANY WITNESSES!

IT AINT THEIR FAULT, MAN! WHY BOTHER?

CLAM UP AN' DRIVE! I KNOW WHAT I'M DOIN'!

IF WE SHUT THEM UP, NO ONE CAN IDENTIFY US!

CRUMMY HIJACKERS! THEY'RE TRYIN' TA KILL US!

DON'T WORRY, BABY! I'LL MAKE 'EM SORRY THEY WUZ BORN!

ALL I GOTTA DO IS CONCENTRATE--CONCENTRATE!

YOU COULDN'T HIT THE SIDE OF A *BARN* IF--

HEY! L-LOOK AT *THAT!*

HE'S--TURNIN' *AROUND!* B-BUT--WHAT *HAPPENED* TO 'IM?

THAT'S *IT*, YA PUNKS!

DON'T STOP *NOW!* JUST COME A LITTLE *CLOSER*--

CLOSE ENUFF FER ME TA GIT MY *MITTS* ON YA!

BECAUSE--

IT'S CRUNCH TIME!

BEN! WHAT *IS* IT DEAR? WHAT *HAPPENED?* ARE YOU *ALRIGHT?*

YA DON'T HAVETA WORRY ABOUT *ME* NONE, BABY--

I AINT EXACTLY THE *DELICATE* TYPE!

BUT I AINT GONNA LET 'EM *COP OUT* LIKE THAT!

I GOTTA *WAKE* 'EM UP! THEY GOT LOTS *MORE* COMIN' TO 'EM!

WHILE I'M *WAITIN'*, I'LL WRAP THE BLASTED *TRUCK* AROUND 'EM!

AND THEN, WHEN I'M *DONE*--

SKR-RR-TCH

NO, BEN--*NO*! YOU'RE LIABLE TO *KILL* THEM!

ARE YOU *KIDDIN'*? WADDAYA THINK THEY WUZ TRYIN' TA DO TO *US*?

BUT--*YOU'RE* NOT A *MURDERER*, BEN!

LOOK, LADY-- DON'T GO GITTIN' ALL HOLIER THAN THOU WIT' *ME*, SEE?

I DON'T NEED'A LISTEN TO NO CRUMMY *LECTURES* FROM *NOBODY*!

BEN! YOU'RE-- *HURTING* ME!

HUH? OH, I-- I'M *SORRY*, KID! I DIDN'T KNOW-- WHAT I WUZ *DOIN'*!

12

PLEASE, CHANGE *BACK*-- CHANGE BACK TO *BEN GRIMM*!

OKAY, BABY--

IF *THAT'S* WHAT YA WANT!

BUT YOU NEVER *ASKED* ME THAT *BEFORE*!

YOU ALWAYS USED TO SAY YA *LIKED* ME AS THE *THING*!

YA USED TO SAY YOU DIDN'T CARE IF I *NEVER* GOT BACK TO NORMAL!

I *KNOW*! BUT--*THIS* TIME--YOU WERE-- *DIFFERENT*!

DIFFERENT, HUH? JUST 'CAUSE I'M *SICK* O' GETTIN' *PUSHED* AROUND?

C'MON, LADY-- I'M TAKIN' YA *HOME*!

WAIT! I--CAN'T KEEP *UP* WITH YOU!

13

MEANWHILE, ANOTHER PROBLEM--ONE FAR MORE TERRIFYING--IS ABOUT TO BE UNVEILED--

THE VISITOR ALARM! THAT MEANS--HE'S HERE AT LAST!

I HOPED--I PRAYED--HE'D HAVE CHANGED HIS MIND!

BZZZZZZZZZZZ

RICHARDS! THIS IS JANUS! I KNOW YOU'RE MONITORING ME!

LET ME IN! I MUST SEE YOU!

CLICK!

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, JANUS!

I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

YOU'RE AFRAID, RICHARDS! THE LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR --IS AFRAID OF ME!

IT'S NOT YOU I'M AFRAID OF!

ALL RIGHT, COME UP! YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE FOR YOURSELF!

DON'T WORRY, BEWILDERED ONE, IF YOU CAN'T REMEMBER WHO JANUS IS! HE'S NEW TO THE STORY! YOU'VE NEVER MET HIM BEFORE--BUT REED HAS! JUST WAIT...IT'LL ALL TIE TOGETHER--WE HOPE! --STARRY-EYED STAN.

I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T REFUSE ME!

DON'T COUNT ON IT!

I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE--NO ONE CAN ENTER THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

BUT I MUST! I MUST! IT'S MY ONLY CHANCE --MY ONLY HOPE!

YOU'VE BEEN THERE AND RETURNED SAFELY! WHY CAN'T I?

COME WITH ME--I'LL SHOW YOU!

WHY DO YOU THINK THE ENTRANCE IS *BARRED* BY A SERIES OF *SOLID STEEL DOORS?*

IT DOESN'T *MATTER!* ALL THAT COUNTS IS--WHAT'S *INSIDE!*

THIK!

IT TOOK ME A *LIFETIME* TO FIND THE GATEWAY TO THE *NEGATIVE ZONE*--

AND I SOMETIMES WISH I HAD *NEVER* DONE IT!

HERE--YOU CAN SEE FOR *YOURSELF*-- ON THE MONITOR SCREEN--!

SEE WHY IT'S THE *DEADLIEST*-- MOST *FRIGHTENING* PLACE OF ALL!

WITH THE MOST BRILLIANT SCIENTIFIC BRAIN ON EARTH OPERATING THE CONTROLS, A NIGHTMARISH PANORAMA SUDDENLY MATERIALIZES ON THE GIANT VIEW-SCREEN--A TERRIFYING TABLEAU, TOO AWESOME FOR WORDS--

YOU'RE *LYING!* IT'S A *TRICK*-- A *STUNT* TO IMPRESS ME!

YOU MADE IT *UP!* NO SUCH MONSTERS *EXIST!*

HOW I WISH YOU WERE *RIGHT,* JANUS!

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S *TRUE*--

--AND THE SCENES YOU SEE ARE JUST THE SLIGHTEST *SAMPLE* OF THE INDESCRIBABLE *HORROR* BEHIND THOSE METAL DOORS!

THE *ONLY* ENTRANCE TO THE *NEGATIVE ZONE* LIES HERE--WITHIN MY *LAB!*

AND I'VE VOWED THAT *NO* LIVING HUMAN WOULD EVER PASS THRU IT AGAIN!

THEN THE TIME HAS COME--TO *BREAK* YOUR VOW!

I'M WILLING TO *TAKE* MY CHANCES!

YOU WON'T BE BLAMED IF ANYTHING *HAPPENS* TO ME!

TO *YOU?*

YOU *FOOL!* IT'S NOT *YOU* I'M WORRIED ABOUT--IT'S THE WHOLE *HUMAN RACE!*

THINK WHAT WOULD *HAPPEN*-- IF ANYTHING WENT *WRONG!!*

"THE LAST TIME THE FF ENTERED THE ZONE--WE ALMOST MET INSTANT *DEATH*--"

**FF KING-SIZE SPECIAL #6.*
--STAN.

"FOR IT WAS THERE THAT WE WERE CAPTURED BY ANNIHILUS, THE MONSTROUS IMMORTAL WHO KILLED--SO THAT HE MIGHT LIVE!"

WITH *ONE* BLAST, I CAN SEND YOU BACK TO THE *NOTHINGNESS* FROM WHENCE YOU CAME!

BUT INSTEAD, YOU SHALL PERISH FOR MY *AMUSEMENT*--

--AS A LESSON TO *OTHERS* WHO MIGHT DARE INVADE *MY* WORLD!

FOR *ANNIHILUS* IS THE *MASTER!*

ONLY *ANNIHILUS* IS THE *POWER!*

JOHNNY! BEN! SAVE YOURSELVES-- *SOMEHOW!*

"IT WAS **IMPOSSIBLE!** IT WAS **MADNESS!** THERE WAS **DEATH** ON EVERY SIDE!"

"THERE WAS NO **CHANCE**-- NO **HOPE!** WE KNEW WE WERE **DOOMED!**"

"IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME--BEFORE WE WOULD **FALL!**"

"NOT ALL OUR **POWER**-- NOT ALL OUR **STRENGTH**-- COULD **SAVE US!**"

"WE COULD BATTLE A **FOE** --BUT NOT A **WORLD!**"

"AND SO, OUR ONLY **HOPE** LAY IN--**ESCAPE!**"

WE **MADE** IT-- BY A **MIRACLE!**

AND **ANNIHILUS** WAS ONLY **ONE** OF THE COUNTLESS **HORRORS** WITHIN THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF **THEY** SHOULD FIND THE **ENTRANCE** --IF THEY SHOULD REACH **OUR** WORLD!!

I CARE **NOTHING** FOR OUR **WORLD!**

CLICK!

I CARE ONLY FOR-- **JANUS!**

CRASH!

HAH! HE THOUGHT I WAS *UNARMED!* BUT I *OUTSMARTED* HIS AUTOMATIC WEAPONS DETECTOR!

MY *ENERGY-RAY* IS MADE OF *PLASTIC*--NOT METAL, AND SO IT *FOOLED* HIS ELECTRO-SCANNERS!

NOW I'LL TRAIN IT ON THE *DOOR* ITSELF!

IT *WORKED!* IT *WORKED!* BEFORE HE RECOVERS, I'LL BE *WITHIN* THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

AT THAT VERY INSTANT, MANY MILES AWAY--HIGH IN THE LONELY, TOWERING ADIRONDACKS--

THERE'S THE *HARKNESS* HOME, JUST *BELOW* ME--

AGATHA HARKNESS IS SITTING OUTSIDE, MINDING LITTLE *FRANKLIN!*

I'LL TURN *INVISIBLE*-- SO THAT I CAN *SURPRISE* THEM!

I'LL REACH OUT AND *PAT* HIM, AND--

MOMMY! MOMMY!

I WAS *INVISIBLE!* HOW DID HE KNOW I WAS *HERE?*

PERHAPS--HE *HEARD* YOU, DEAR!

BUT--I DIDN'T MAKE A *SOUND!*

I WOULDN'T **WORRY** ABOUT IT, MRS. RICHARDS! LET'S JUST SAY--HE'S EXTREMELY--**ALERT!**

AND NOW... WOULD YOU CARE FOR **TEA,** MY DEAR?

I ALWAYS HAVE THE FEELING--SHE'S **KEEPING** SOMETHING FROM ME!

BUT SHE TAKES GOOD CARE OF **FRANKLIN**--AND THAT'S WHAT **COUNTS!**

WHILE, BACK AT THE BAXTER BUILDING--

HEY, **BEN**--DO YOU KNOW WHERE **REED** IS?

I WANNA **TALK** TO HIM!

WADDA I **LOOK** LIKE--A BLASTED **INFORMATION BOOTH?**

LOOK, MAN--IF YOU'RE **UPTIGHT,** DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON **ME,** HEAR? I GOT MY **OWN** TROUBLES!

JUST 'CAUSE YOU **LOOK** LIKE AN APE--YOU DON'T HAVETA **ACT** LIKE ONE!

YOU LOUD-MOUTHED LITTLE **CREEP**--WHO DO YA THINK YER **TALKIN'** TO?

DON'T **TRY** IT, BEN! DON'T MAKE ME **FLAME ON!**

I'M GONNA SHOW YA WHAT **HAPPENS** TA KIDS WHO GIT TOO **BIG** FER THEIR KNEE-PANTS!

GO AHEAD--**DO** IT!

I'LL **SNUFF** YA OUT LIKE A **MATCH-STICK!**

HOLD IT--BOTH OF YOU!

HUH? WHERE'D **YOU** COME FROM?

REED!

IF IT'S A **FIGHT** YOU WANT, YOU'LL GET **MORE** THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR!

WHILE YOU TWO ARE PLAYING **GAMES,** OUR HEADQUARTERS IS UNDER **ATTACK!**

ANSWER ME QUICK--

HAVE ANY OF YOU SEEN-- JANUS?

JANUS? WHAT WOULD HE BE DOIN' HERE?

THAT TELLS ME WHAT I HAD TO KNOW!

HE COULDN'T HAVE LEFT WITHOUT GETTING PAST YOU--

AND HE'S NO LONGER IN THE LAB!

THEN WHERE CAN HE BE?

I'LL TURN ON THE VIEW SCREEN AND SHOW YOU--

BEN-- QUIT CHANGING BACK AND FORTH, WILLYA?

IT GIVES ME THE WILLIES!

THERE! THERE HE IS-- JUST AS I FEARED!

IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP HIM NOW!

REED! THAT WAS--THE ENTRANCE TO --THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

HE MUSTA BEEN CRAZY! WHY DID HE DO IT?

THAT NO LONGER MATTERS!

ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS--

THE MAN CALLED JANUS HAS JUST BECOME--

THE MOST DANGEROUS HUMAN OF ALL!

NEXT: THE REASON WHY!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

FANTASTIC FOUR

15¢ CC | 108 MAR

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

EVEN THE F.F. ARE POWERLESS AGAINST THE NEGA-MAN!

ACTION! SHOCK! MYSTERY! THIS ONE HAS 'EM--AND HOW!

IF WE DON'T STOP HIM--HE'LL DESTROY THE ENTIRE--

UNNHH!

REED! HE WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO KNOCK OUT THE THING! HOW CAN WE--?

REED!

THE ENTIRE WORLD MAY CRUMBLE, IF THE F.F. FAILS TO SOLVE···

THE MONSTROUS MYSTERY OF THE NEGA-MAN!

REED! YOUR VIEW-SCREEN SHOWS JANUS-- PLUNGING INTO THE NEGATIVE ZONE! BUT--- HOW--?

HE STOLE INTO THE LAB-- GOT PAST MY DEFENSES--

AND NOW HE'S BECOME --THE MOST DANGEROUS HUMAN OF ALL!

I DON'T READ YA, STRETCH.

YOU'RE WRONG, BEN. YOU DON'T KNOW ALL THE FACTS.

LISTEN --I'LL EXPLAIN--

SO HE BUSTED INTA THE NEGATIVE ZONE-- SO WHAT?

"THINK BACK-- BACK TO THE TIME A STRANGE, GYROSCOPIC AIRCRAFT ATTACKED THE VERY HEART OF NEW YORK--"

HE AIN'T GOT A CHANCE O'GETTIN' OUT ALIVE.

LOOK! IN THE AIR ABOVE--

WHAT KIND OF SHIP IS THAT?

By:
Stan LEE and Jack KIRBY
INKING: JOE SINNOTT
LETTERING: SAM ROSEN

WITH LAST-MINUTE REVISIONS, DELETIONS, AND ADDENDA BY:
S. LEE, J. BUSCEMA AND J. ROMITA

520-Z

"REACHING STREET LEVEL, IT PLOWED **MERCILESSLY** THRU ANYTHING IN ITS PATH."

IT--CUT THRU THAT **TRUCK**--

LIKE A **KNIFE**-- THRU BUTTER.

FTUNG!!

LOOK OUT!

IT--ITS COMING RIGHT **TOWARDS** US!

HE'S HEADING FOR THE **BANK!**

BANK

RUN! RUN!

YES, **FLEE!** FLEE IN TERROR-- LIKE THE TIMID **SHEEP** YOU ARE---

FLEE-- AS I CRASH INTO YOUR PUNY **BANK** WITH ONLY A **FRACTION** OF MY POWER!

AND NOW THAT I HAVE **ACHIEVED** MY OBJECTIVE--

IT IS TIME FOR ME TO **REVEAL** MYSELF ...

JUST AS IT IS TIME FOR THE **HUMAN RACE**--

--TO MEET ITS INVINCIBLE NEW **MASTER!**

CRINGE, YOU HAPLESS WEAKLINGS! CRINGE, AND TREMBLE, AS YOU FINALLY BEHOLD--

THE NEGA-MAN

NO FORCE ON EARTH IS THE EQUAL OF-- MY NEGATIVE POWER!

SEE HOW THE SIMPLEST PRESSURE ON MY CONTROL MODULE--

CAN CREATE A NEGA-POWERED CONCUSSION BLAST!

SHOOM!

OR, WITH EQUAL EASE, CAN TRIGGER A TRANQUILIZER MIST...

BRINGING INSTANT SLEEP TO ANYONE!

AND NOW NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM PLUNDERING THE VAULT AT WILL!

HEY! WHAT'S A GUY HAVETA DO TA GIT A LITTLE PRIVACY 'ROUND HERE?

THE THING!

NOTE: IF NONE OF THIS MAKES SENSE TO YOU, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. ONLY MIXED-UP MARVEL WOULD ATTEMPT TO SHOW FLASHBACK SCENES FROM A STORY WE'VE NEVER PRINTED BEFORE!..SINCERE STAN.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING INSIDE THIS VAULT?

PUTTIN' A LITTLE NEST EGG ASIDE FER A RAINY DAY.

NOW GIT LOST, SONNY. YER STARTIN' TA BREATHE ON ME.

YOU GROTESQUE, OVER-RATED CLOD! YOU'RE TALKING TO JANUS, THE NEGA-MAN!

LOOK, CORNBALL--YA'LL BE JANUS WIT' THE FAT LIP IF YA DON'T GIT OFFA MY BACK!

VERY WELL-- YOU ASKED FOR IT.

ALL I NEED DO IS SET THE MODULE--

-- AND THE THING WILL TROUBLE ME NO MORE!

OKAY, BUTTERCUP-- IF THIS IS WHAT YER TRYIN TA DO---

YA SHOULDA SAID SO.

NOW GO PLAY WIT' YER TOYS SOMEWHERE ELSE, HUH?

I DUNNO WHY ALL THE CRACKPOTS LATCH ONTA ME!

NOT AFTER I'VE INCREASED THE MASS OF MY ATOMIC STRUCTURE--

BY PRESSING MY CONTROL MODULE TO HIGHEST INTENSITY.

NEVER AGAIN WILL YOU CALL JANUS A CRACKPOT--

NOW, MY STRENGTH HAS BEEN MOMENTARILY INCREASED..

BEYOND ANY-THING THAT EVEN YOU CAN COPE WITH.

STOK!

YOU THOUGHT I WAS MERELY A SIMPLE ECCENTRIC.

BUT NOW.. YOU WILL THINK DIFFERENTLY.

-- IF YOU ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO EVER THINK AGAIN.

BEN, I'M SORRY I'M LATE. I WAS-- HEY!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

SO.. THE HUMAN TORCH WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET HIS BESTIAL FRIEND HERE, EH?

A PITY THE NEGA-MAN MUST FORCE YOU TO CHANGE YOUR PLANS.

NEGA-MAN?

LOOK, I DUNNO HOW YOU FLOORED THE THING.. BUT NOBODY DOES THAT TO A MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

FLAME ON!

YOU MAY BURST INTO *FLAME* TO YOUR HEART'S *CONTENT*...

BUT, WHAT CHANCE DO YOU HAVE AGAINST *JANUS*--?

--WHEN THE *NEGA-MAN* CAN MEET YOUR ATTACK BY SWINGING A *VAULT DOOR* HELD IN *ONE* HAND!

I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GOT YOUR *STRENGTH* FROM, MISTER-- AND I COULDN'T CARE *LESS*.

BUT YOU *SAW* HOW I BURNED THRU THAT *TEN-TON DOOR*.

SO, IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S *GOOD* FOR YOU---

INDEED I *DO*.

--WHICH IS WHY I NOW *ALTER* MY MODULE'S *FREQUENCY*.

--CONVERTING IT TO *ELECTRICAL VOLTAGE*.

IN SHORT, I'VE NOW BECOME--

A *LIVING DYNAMO!*

ONLY YOUR **FLAME** CAN PREVENT THE SHOCK FROM **SLAYING** YOU.

POOR, PITIFUL JOHNNY STORM.

JOHNNY STORM

JOHNNY STORM

JOHNNY

JOHNNY

JOHNNY

JOHNNY

JOHNNY-- **JOHNNY.** HEY, IT'S **OKAY,** REED. HE'S COMIN' **TO.**

HUH?

WHA--WHAT **HAPPENED?**

TAKE IT **EASY,** KID. YA JUST GOT **CLOBBERED--** SAME AS **ME---** BY THAT NUT **JANUS.**

THE ONE WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE **NEGA-MAN?**

THEN--IT REALLY **HAPPENED?** I WASN'T **DREAMING.**

WHERE'S **REED?** WE'VE GOTTA **TELL** HIM.

RIGHT **HERE** LAD. BEN TOLD ME **EVERY-THING.**

I NEVER **HEARD** OF THE **NEGA-MAN** BEFORE.

WHO **IS** HE REED? HOW DID HE GET HIS **POWER?**

IF HE'S THE ONE I **THINK** HE IS---

AND, FROM BEN'S **DESCRIPTION,** HE VERY WELL **MIGHT** BE--

HOLD IT. THE **VISI-PHONE'S** LIGHTING UP.

HEY! THAT **FACE--** STARTIN' TA FORM ON THE **SCREEN--**

IT'S **HIM!**

RICHARDS! THANK HEAVEN I REACHED YOU.

IT'S JANUS. DO YOU REMEMBER ME?

YES, YES. OF COURSE I DO.

I NEED HELP --DESPERATELY.

I'M LIVING IN MIDVALE, OFF ROUTE 22.

THE ADDRESS --45 ELM ROAD.

GET HERE AT ONCE! YOU MUSTN'T FAIL ME.

WHAT IS IT, JANUS? WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

DANGER! A TERRIBLE DANGER!

I DON'T GIT IT! A FEW HOURS AGO HE WUZ CLOBBERIN' EVERY-ONE HE SAW.

NOW, HE SUDDENLY SOUNDS LIKE A TREMBLIN' MISTER NICE!

IT'S GOTTA BE SOME KINDA TRAP.

REED-- HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM?

YEARS AGO-- WE TOOK THE SAME SCIENCE COURSE IN COLLEGE.

BUT HE BECAME OBSESSED WITH TRYING TO FIND A NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY---

WAIT! LOOK AT THE SCREEN! SOME-THING'S WRONG!

SOME-THING'S IN THE ROOM WITH HIM.

SOMETHING HE'S SCARED OF.

NO! NO! STAY BACK-- KEEP AWAY FROM ME!

I-- I WOULDN'T HAVE BETRAYED YOU-- I SWEAR IT!

YOU MUST BELIEVE ME. KEEP BACK-- BACK--

VZOOM!!

LOOK OUT!

THE BLASTED SCREEN BLEW!

IT AIN'T **POSSIBLE!** **NOTHIN'** THAT HAPPENS IN **MIDVALE** CAN BUST OUR VIZI-PHONE 'WAY OVER **HERE!**

NOTHING -- EXCEPT A POSSIBLE NEW SOURCE OF **ENERGY** -- MORE **POWERFUL** THAN ANY OTHER FORCE ON **EARTH!**

THAT MUST BE WHAT HE MEANT---WHEN HE REFERRED TO HIS **NEGATIVE POWER!**

THEN **THAT'S** WHY JANUS CALLED HIMSELF--THE **NEGA-MAN!**

BUT, I **STILL** DON'T UNDERSTAND--

WHO-- OR **WHAT**-- WAS HE **AFRAID** OF?

REED! I HEARD AN **EXPLOSION.** WHAT **HAPPENED?**

THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE TO FIND **OUT,** DARLING.

A TRIP? TO **WHERE?**

YOU AND ARE TAKING A LITTLE **TRIP.**

MIDVALE-- TO TACKLE THE MYSTERY OF THE **NEGA-MAN!**

I'LL CLUE YOU IN AS WE GO ALONG

YOU LOOK SO **GRIM,** DEAR. IS IT ANYTHING **SERIOUS?**

IF IT'S WHAT I **SUSPECT**-- THE WHOLE **HUMAN RACE** MAY BE IN DANGER!

BUT NO SENSE **WORRYING** TILL WE KNOW FOR **SURE.** CAN YOU LEAVE RIGHT **NOW?**

OF **COURSE**-- IF YOU **WANT** ME TO.

HEY, STRING-BEAN-- **WHAT** ABOUT **US?**

I'M ONLY TAKING **SUE.**

BEN, I WANT YOU AND JOHNNY TO **PATROL** THE CITY.

BUT-- IF JANUS IS IN **MIDVALE** --WHAT'LL WE BE LOOKING FOR **HERE?**

MEBBE HE JUST WANTS A **SMOOCH** WITH SUE.

TRUST ME. I **KNOW** WHAT I'M DOING.

WE TRUST YA-- WE TRUST YA.

HE CAN'T FOOL *ME*. THERE'S STILL A *LOT* HE AIN'T *TOLD* US.

FUNNY--*I* ALSO HAD THE FEELING THAT HE'S HOLDING SOMETHING *BACK*.

BUT WHAT CAN IT *BE*?

THE WHOLE THING'S LIKE A *JIG-SAW PUZZLE*--- WITH LOTS OF *MISSING* PIECES.

KNOW SOMETHIN', JUNIOR? YA GOT A REAL FLAIR FER THE *DRAMATIC*.

NOW *SHUDDUP'N* SIGNAL THE *ELEVATOR!*

NO KIDDING, BEN-- HOW DID JANUS *CHANGE* THE WAY HE DID?

AND WHY MUST WE STAY *HERE* WHEN THE NEGA-MAN'S IN *MIDVALE*?

WHAT ARE WE ON *PATROL* HERE FOR?

NOT EVEN *JANUS* CAN BE IN *TWO* PLACES AT *ONCE*.

DOWN

I WISH HE *WUZ*-- SO'S I COULD TEAR *INTA* HIM AGAIN.

HOW *COME*? YOU DIDN'T DO SO GOOD THE *FIRST* TIME.

NOBODY LIKES A A *SMART-MOUTH*, KID!

YOU WANT US TO USE THE *POGO PLANE*?

HECK *NO*. I JUST GIT MY *KICKS* OUTTA OPENIN' 'N SHUTTIN' COCKPIT *DOORS*.

NOW GIT *IN* 'N GIVE YER JAWS A REST.

MAN! IF WE EVER GIT OUTTA THE *SUPERHEROING* RACKET-- WOTTA *DRAGSTER* THIS'D MAKE!

KNOCK IT *OFF*, BEN.

YOU'RE AS WORRIED AS *I* AM-- AND YOU *KNOW* IT.

YEAH? WHO MADE YOU A MIND-READER ALL OF A SUDDEN?

HEY! WAIT A MINNIT--

SOMETHIN'S HAPPENIN' DOWN THERE! HANG ON, MATCH-HEAD!

I SEE IT, BEN. BUT--I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

MEBBE THIS IS WHAT STRETCHO WUZ EXPECT-IN'?

BUT-- HOW DID HE KNOW?

A WHOLE STREET'S BEING TORN UP-- RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!

MUST BE MORE OF THAT BLASTED NEGA POWER--OR WHAT-EVER HE CALLED IT!

BUT HOW-- IF JANUS IS IN MIDVALE?

"AND NOW, BACK TO THE PRESENT AGAIN..."

AWRIGHT-- AWRIGHT! WHAT IS THIS-- THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS ?!!

I KNOW, BEN. BUT IT'S VITAL THAT I REVIEW THE FACTS.

YOU AIN'T TELLIN' US NOTHIN' NEW, MISTER--WE WERE THERE!

I HAVE TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND.

THEN HOW'S ABOUT GETTIN' TO THE POINT? --IF THERE IS ONE ?

THERE IS ONE, ALL RIGHT.

BUT IT'S SO INCREDIBLE-- I'M ALMOST AT A LOSS FOR WORDS.

YOU? THAT'LL BE THE DAY!

THINK BACK AGAIN -- BACK TO THAT DAY WHEN YOU LANDED THE POGO PLANE -- AND SAW --

I KEEP TELLIN' YA -- WE KNOW WHAT WE SAW.

IT AIN'T THE KIND OF THING YA CAN EVER FORGET!

BEAR WITH ME, BEN! JUST A LITTLE LONGER..

"DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST THING YOU SAW AS YOU APPROACHED GROUND LEVEL? IT WAS A FIGURE -- THE FIGURE OF---"

JANUS! I KNEW IT HADDA BE HIM!

THEN HE LED STRETCHO A WILD GOOSE CHASE!

HE AIN'T IN MIDVALE. HE'S RIGHT HERE!

BACK --ALL OF YOU!

THE NEGA-MAN COMMANDS!

HE CAN LEVEL A BUILDING -- JUST BY USING THAT RAY!

SEND YOUR MAYOR TO ME.

I WILL DICTATE THE TERMS UNDER WHICH HE WILL SURRENDER THE CITY AND ALL IT CONTAINS TO ME!

BUT FIRST... I SEE AN AIRCRAFT DARING TO APPROACH ME---

IT'S THE POGO PLANE OF THE SOON-TO-BE-HUMBLED FANTASTIC FOUR!

ONE NEGA-POWER HAND-BLAST WILL DISPOSE OF IT!

BEN! I CAN'T FLAME ON! IT'S -- TOO COLD!

THE CONTROLS ARE ICED UP!

CAN'T KEEP HER IN THE AIR!

BRACE YERSELF, KID! THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TA DO--

I'LL BREAK THRU THE FUSILLAGE-- WITH MY LEGS--

KRAK!

--'N USE 'EM WHEN WE HIT...

--TO ABSORB THE SHOCK!

THOOOM!

I DONE BETTER LANDINGS IN MY TIME--

BUT AT LEAST WE'RE IN ONE PIECE.

YOU DID YOUR SHARE, BEN---

NOW I'LL DO MINE!

GO GIT 'IM, HOT STUFF!

NUTS! I CAN'T FIND HIM ANY-WHERE!

BUT WHERE COULD HE HAVE GONE? --AND WHY?

HE DIDN'T DO ALL OF THIS JUST FOR LAUGHS.

THAT SIGN ON THE WALL-- ITS PART OF THE ANSWER.

WARNING! THE CITY HAS 24 HOURS TO TURN OVER THE ENTIRE TREASURY TO ME--OR PERISH! THIS WAS JUST A SAMPLE! Janus

THE *TORCH!* YOU AND YOUR SHOW-OFF *PARTNERS* WERE A GREAT HELP!

WHERE WERE YA WHEN WE *NEEDED* YOU?

WHO'S PUTTIN' MY *BUDDY* DOWN?

ANYONE GOT ANY *GRIPES?* YA CAN TAKE 'EM UP WITH THE BLUE-EYED *THING!*

HAH! LOOK AT THE CREEPS *RUN!*

NEVER MIND *THEM*, BEN. I'M WONDERING IF *JANUS* TOOK OFF FOR *MIDVALE*-- AND FOR *REED?*

"AND, EVEN AS JOHNNY WAS *SPEAKING* --"

THERE HE *IS*, SUE!

EXCEPT FOR HIS *LEGS*, WHICH WERE *ALWAYS* AFFLICTED, HE SEEMS *UNHARMED!*

JUST TO PLAY *SAFE*, YOU'D BETTER TURN *INVISIBLE*--

TILL WE LEARN WHAT IT'S ALL *ABOUT.*

IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO *COME*, RICHARDS.

NEVER MIND *THAT!* THERE'S ONLY *ONE* THING THAT MATTERS--

HOW DID HE TAP THE POWER OF--- THE *NEGATIVE ZONE?*

HE--HE *DIDN'T!*

DON'T *LIE* TO ME JANUS!

HOW DID YOU FIND *OUT* ABOUT -- HIM?

I *DIDN'T*. BUT FROM ALL THE *EVIDENCE*, IT WASN'T HARD TO *GUESS* YOUR SECRET.

I -- CAN NO LONGER -- *CONTROL* HIM!

LISTEN! THAT *SOUND!* IT MEANS HE'S *RETURNING!*

GOOD! THEN I WON'T HAVE TO *SEARCH* FOR HIM!

BUT YOU DON'T *UNDER-STAND.*

YOU DON'T KNOW THE EXTENT OF HIS *POWER!*

PERHAPS *YOU* DON'T KNOW -- THE EXTENT OF *MINE!*

KLIK!

SEE? I'VE RETURNED *SAFELY* -- AS I *SAID* I WOULD!

NO ONE CAN DEFY MY *NEGA-POWER!*

NO ONE, JANUS?

WHA--?!!

DON'T MOVE! DON'T REACH FOR YOUR CONTROL MODULE.
THE LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
MY OWN BROTHER-- BETRAYED ME!
DON'T CALL ME--YOUR BROTHER!
TALK, JANUS! TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW OF-- THE NEGATIVE ZONE!
I'LL TELL YOU NOTHING! NOTHING!
BROTHER! YOU MUST HELP ME! NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK OF ME-- YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!
REMEMBER WHO-- AND WHAT I AM!
I HAVE TRIED--TO FORGET.
BUT, AS HEAVEN IS MY WITNESS--I CAN'T! I CAN'T!
MUST HIS FATE BE FOREVER MINE?
CAN THERE NEVER BE AN END TO IT?
THE CHOICE IS MINE! --MINE!
AND I MUST MAKE IT-- NOW!
THAT'S IT! SHOOT HIM! HURRY, BROTHER --SHOOT HIM!
I AM NOT-- YOUR BROTHER
KRAK!
YOU FOOL!
DO YOU-- KNOW-- WHAT YOU'VE-- DONE?

I KNOW- I KNOW---

AND IT WILL HAUNT ME-- TO THE GRAVE.

REED! HE KILLED HIM!

NO, SUE! YOU CANNOT KILL WHAT DOESN'T EXIST!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

LOOK, DARLING-- LOOK!

HIS BODY-- IS FADING AWAY-- INTO NOTHING-NESS!

TELL HER, JANUS. OR ELSE I WILL!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN I COULDN'T FOOL YOU, RICHARDS.

AFTER ALL, I ASKED YOU TO HELP ME WITH MY SEARCH FOR NEGA-POWER-- BACK DURING OUR COLLEGE DAYS---

--EVEN THOUGH YOU CAUTIONED ME AGAINST IT!

YOU WENT ON TO OTHER THINGS-- -- BUT I NEVER GAVE UP!

THEN, ONE DAY-- THE VERY POWER I HAD SOUGHT-- CHANGED ME-- TURNED ME INTO-- THE ULTIMATE SCHIZOPHRENIC!

IT'S LIKE THE LEGEND OF JEKYLL AND HYDE -- COME TO LIFE!

I AM ALL THAT IS EVIL WITHIN YOU, JANUS!

NEGA-POWER HAS GIVEN ME SHAPE-- AND FORM!

I WILL USE THAT POWER-- TO DO WHAT YOU WOULD NEVER DARE!

I SHALL BE MASTER OF THE WORLD!

ALL THESE YEARS-- I *FEARED* HIM-- BUT I WAS HELPLESS TO *STOP* HIM.

FOR, IF *HE* SHOULD DIE-- HOW DID I KNOW THAT *I* WOULDN'T DIE AS WELL?

IT TOOK *COURAGE* TO END IT *NOW*, JANUS.

THEN IT'S *OVER* -- AT LAST

WE'LL *LEAVE* YOU.

THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO SAY.

"BUT, WE WERE *WRONG*. IT *WASN'T* OVER!"

LEFT TO HIMSELF, JANUS COULDN'T STOP *EXPERIMENTING*. HE USED THE NEGA-POWER TO CURE HIS *LEGS*-- BUT THAT WASN'T *ENOUGH*---

EVENTUALLY HE WANTED *MORE* POWER --FAR, FAR *MORE*--

AND THE ONLY PLACE HE COULD *GET* IT--

THE *NEGATIVE ZONE*! YA DON'T HAVETA *SPELL* IT OUT!

THEN *THAT* EXPLAINS IT!

THAT'S WHY HE BROKE INTO YOUR *LAB*! *THAT'S* WHY HE STOLE *PAST* YOU -- TO FACE THE HORRORS OF THE *NEGATIVE ZONE*!

FOR ANY *OTHER* MAN, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN *SUICIDE*! BUT *NOT* FOR JANUS!

WHY *NOT*, BIG BRAIN?

BECAUSE HE ALREADY *POSSESSES* NEGA-POWER-- ENOUGH TO *PROTECT* HIM THERE!

IT'S NOT *JANUS* WHO'S IN DANGER-- IT'S THE WHOLE *HUMAN RACE*!

WHEN HE *RETURNS*-- HE'LL BE *UN-BEATABLE*!

AND WHAT IF HE'S *FOLLOWED* BACK-- BY THE *MONSTERS* THAT LIVE THERE?

IF *THEY* EVER MAKE IT INTA THIS DIMENSION-- EVEN *WE* AIN'T GONNA BE ABLE TA *STOP* 'EM!

WE GOTTA GO *AFTER* 'IM -- DRAG 'IM *BACK*-- *NOW*, BEFORE IT'S *TOO LATE!*

WAIT, BEN! WE'LL NEED OUR *PROTECTIVE HARNESSES!*

NOBODY GOES -- TILL I GIVE THE *WORD!*

AND THAT MEANS *NOBODY!*

YA BLASTED *NINCOMPOOP!* EVERY SECOND WE *WAIT* IS GONNA MAKE IT *TOUGHER* TA *FIND* 'IM!

SUE-- WHAT'S *WRONG?*

REED! BEN! HOLD IT!

IT'S THE *SITUATION RED* ALARM!

FROM THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

WHAT'S IT *MEAN?*

IT MEANS -- WE MAY BE TOO LATE *ALREADY!*

SOMETHING IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE HAS FOUND THE *ENTRANCE* IN OUR LAB!

IT'S HEADING *THIS* WAY!

IT'S-- *ANNIHILUS!*

NEXT: *INTO* THE NEGATIVE ZONE !!

YOU MUST NOT MISS IT!!

FANTASTIC FOUR

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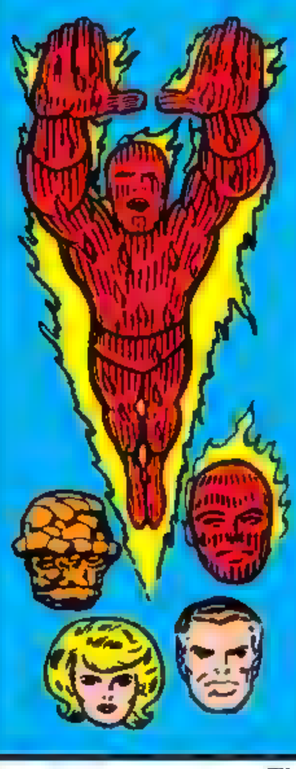

MARVEL™ COMICS GROUP

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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Fantastic Four™

FEATURING: ANNIHILUS, THE LIVING DEATH WHO WALKS!

ONCE YOU HAVE FOUND ME--

--YOU WILL NEVER RETURN!

HE'S WAITING FOR US! BUT-- WE CAN'T TURN BACK!

SAY SOMETHIN', STRETCH-- HOW DO WE GET WITHIN CLOBBERIN' RANGE?

TO DIE IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

A MIGHTY MARVEL WINNER!

JB JS

THE FABULOUS F.F. BATTLE THE DREAD ANNIHILUS, ONLY TO FIND···

DEATH IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

THE MAN CALLED *JANUS* HAS FOUND THE SECRET OF *NEGATIVE POWER*--- GIVING HIM THE ABILITY TO BECOME THE SUPER-STRONG *NEGA-MAN!* BUT, SEEKING EVEN *GREATER* POWER, HE HAS INVADED THE AWESOME *NEGATIVE ZONE* ITSELF--- WHERE HE NOW MUST FACE--*ANNIHILUS*--!

ONCE *AGAIN* A FOOLHARDY *HUMAN* IS ABOUT TO BECOME···MY *VICTIM!*

OUT OF MY *WAY*-- *WHO-EVER* YOU ARE!

I POSSESS MORE *POWER* THAN YOU CAN *SUSPECT.*

AND *SOON* I WILL HAVE ---EVEN *MORE!*

AND, AS OUR MIND-BOGGLING TALE *BEGINS*, ALL THIS IS HAPPENING UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*, GRIMLY VIEWING THE SCENE ON REED'S *VISI-SCANNER*···

STORY: STAN LEE
ART: J. BUSCEMA
INKS: J. SINNOTT
LETTERING: S. ROSEN

WHAT MORE COULD ANYONE WANT?

ANNIHILUS COULD HAVE *SEEN* WHERE JANUS *CAME* FROM.

DO YOU KNOW-- WHAT THAT *MEANS?*

IT MEANS THAT HE MIGHT *LEARN* HOW TO ENTER *OUR WORLD!*

IF *HE*-- AND HIS HORDES SHOULD *ATTACK*-- ALL OF *MANKIND* COULD BE SWIFTLY *WIPED OUT!*

"IT'S ALL *MY* FAULT! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE *ALLOWED* HIM TO ENTER MY *LAB*--"

THRU THIS *SCREEN* I CAN VIEW THE *NEGATIVE ZONE.*

TELL ME *MORE,* RICHARDS.

"I HAD NO REASON TO *SUSPECT* THAT HE WAS DESPERATE ENOUGH TO DO WHAT HE *DID*--"

THIS WILL *PREVENT* YOU FROM TRYING TO *STOP* ME---

--FROM ENTERING THE FORBIDDEN *NEGATIVE ZONE.*

NOW-- *NOW* I WILL FIND THE *SOURCE* OF THE DEADLIEST *NEGA-POWER*--

AND THEN I WILL HAVE IT *ALL!*

AND NOW THAT WE'VE *RECAPPED* THE HIGH POINT OF LAST ISH--*ONWARD*---

AND SO-- WE HAVE *NO CHOICE.*

WE MUST GO *AFTER* HIM-- *INTO THE NEGATIVE ZONE!*

DARLING, YOU *MUSTN'T!*

LAST TIME YOU WERE ALMOST *KILLED!*

SHEESH! EVERY TIME YA TURN *AROUND,* WE'RE SAVIN' THE WORLD FROM *SOMETHIN'!!*

THERE'S NO OTHER *WAY,* SUE--

WE *MUST* PREVENT ANNIHILUS FROM *REACHING* US---

AND WE *CANNOT* LET JANUS GAIN THE DEADLY *POWER* HE SEEKS.

EVEN *NOW* HE'S TRYING TO OUTWIT *ANNIHILUS...*

YOU THINK I'M JUST A HELP-LESS HUMAN, DO YOU?

BUT, ALL I NEED DO IS PRESS MY NEGA-RAY CONTROL MODULE--

CLICK!

AND THE SAME NEGATIVE POWER THAT BINDS THIS UNIVERSE-- IS MINE!

NOW, BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM, YOU FOOL.

YOU'RE FACING JANUS -- THE NEGA-MAN!

YOU THINK TRANSFORMING YOUR GARMENT CAN SAVE YOU FROM ME?

MORE THAN MY CLOTHING HAS BEEN TRANS-FORMED.

THIS WILL SHOW YOU THE POWER I CONTROL!

POWER? YOU CALL THAT POWER?

SHAKK!

YOU -- YOU'RE JUST STANDING THERE!

IT DIDN'T EVEN SHAKE YOU!

WHO ARE YOU? ANSWER ME --- WHO ARE YOU?

DID YOU NOT GUESS?

I AM ANNIHILUS ... LORD OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

ANNIHILUS THE LIVING DEATH THAT WALKS!

WOE TO ALL WHO LIVE THAT COME MY WAY.

FOR, ONLY BY DESTROY-ING LIFE -- CAN ANNIHILUS BE FOREVER REBORN!

THESE ARE THE FLYING HARNESSES BEN AND I WILL NEED.

JOHNNY ALREADY HAS HIS FLAME.

REED! WHAT ABOUT ME?

YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME BE-HIND!

YOU MUST STAY, SUE.

SOMEONE HAS TO REMAIN AT THE VISI-SCREEN -- TO MONI-TOR OUR JOURNEY.

SOMETHIN' TELLS ME YOU AIN'T BETTIN' ON US COMIN' BACK ALIVE, STRETCHO.

SHUT UP, BEN!

THAT'S THE REAL REASON YOU WON'T TAKE ME -- I KNOW IT!

OH REED -- REED -- IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO---

DON'T SAY IT, DARLING! THERE'S MORE THAN OUR LITTLE LIVES AT STAKE!

THINK, SUE! THINK WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ANNIHILUS BREAKS THRU---

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE POWER CAN'T CO-EXIST IN THE SAME WORLD!

THE CARNAGE WOULD BE WORSE THAN ANYTHING YOU CAN IMAGINE!

"WITHIN MINUTES, ALL LIFE -- AS WE KNOW IT -- WOULD COME TO AN END -- AS THE FORCES OF NATURE ITSELF WOULD RUN WILD -- STREWING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION THROUGHOUT THE PLANET -- THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!"

NOW SHOWING

BROADWAY

42ST.

INK

DRIVEN BY HIS *MADNESS*-- BY HIS INSANE LUST FOR *POWER*-- JANUS HAS OPENED A *PANDORA'S BOX* OF HORROR---

WHICH ONLY *WE* CAN CLOSE!

AND IF IT SHOULD COST OUR *LIVES*--

IT'S A *SMALL* ENOUGH PRICE TO PAY!

WE'LL *TAKE OFF* AS SOON AS I ATTACH THIS *GYRO-HOMING* DEVICE TO MY HARNESS!

YOU'LL REMAIN AT THE *VISI-SCREEN*, SUE! AND YOU MUSTN'T *LEAVE* IT-- FOR *ANYTHING!*

REMEMBER, DARLING-- UNTIL WE *RETURN*-- YOU'LL BE OUR *ONLY* CONTACT WITH EARTH!

YOU *MUST* RETURN-- ALL *THREE* OF YOU! YOU *MUST!*

THAT'S NOT THE *IMPORTANT* THING, SUE.

JUST PRAY--THAT WE DON'T *FAIL!*

YOU SURE GOT A WAY OF BUILDIN' UP *CONFIDENCE*, BIG BRAIN.

STOW THE SMALL TALK, BEN!

PREPARE TO ENTER *CHAMBER #1!*

SEAL THE DOOR *BEHIND* US, SUE!

WE'LL OPEN THE *INNER* COMPLEX.

OH, *GOD!* IT'S SO MUCH *HARDER*--TO STAY BEHIND-- AND *WAIT!*

KLIK!

MEANWHILE, JUST A FEW MINUTES AHEAD OF THEM ---

HE-- MADE ME LOSE MY *FOOTING---*

JUST BY *GESTURING* AT THE ROCK!

BUT I MUSTN'T PANIC-- MUSTN'T GIVE UP.

THE PRIZE IS TOO GREAT! IT MUST BE MINE.

I'VE TOYED WITH YOU ENOUGH--

YOUR TIME HAS COME--TO DIE!

WAIT! FIRST HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY!

WHAT WORDS OF YOURS CAN MATTER TO ANNIHILUS?

KILLING ME WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. BUT WHAT IF I TELL YOU--HOW TO DESTROY THE HUMAN RACE?

I CAN LEAD YOU BACK-- BACK THRU THE ENTRANCE I CAME FROM---

THE ENTRANCE TO EARTH ITSELF!

I'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY! YOU CAN WIPE OUT MANKIND!

SO! TO SAVE YOUR OWN WORTHLESS LIFE, YOU WOULD CONDEMN THE HUMAN RACE!

AT LAST YOU BEGIN TO INTER-EST ME.

LONG HAVE I THIRSTED FOR DIRE REVENGE UPON THE HUMANS WHO ONCE ESCAPED ME--THEY WHO WERE CALLED THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

I SHALL SPARE YOU, MORTAL! BUT, BECAUSE OF YOU-- UNTOLD MILLIONS SHALL MEET THEIR DOOM!

AND, EVEN AS ANNIHILUS *SPEAKS*...!

SUPPOSE WE *REACH* ANNIHILUS? HOW YA GONNA *STOP* A CREEP LIKE HIM?

WITH THE IONIC *STUN-BOLT* BLASTER, STRAPPED TO MY SHOULDER.

BUT, ITS NOT *STRONG* ENOUGH TO HURT *ANNIHILUS*.

I *KNOW* THAT, JOHNNY! *NOTHING* IS.

BUT THE *IONIC BLAST* CHARGES WILL *DISORIENT* HIM LONG ENOUGH TO SAVE US-- IF WE'RE *LUCKY*.

QUIET NOW! WE'RE REACHING THE *FINAL* CHAMBER.

BRACE YOURSELVES! I'M ABOUT TO *OVER-RIDE* THE *FAIL SAFE* SWITCH!

ONCE IT'S *RELEASED*, THERE CAN BE *NO TURNING BACK!*

NOW!

KLIK!

WE'VE *DONE* IT!

WE'RE ENTERING THE *DISTORTION ZONE!*

WE PASSED THE *BARRIER!* WE'RE *THRU!*

BUT-- I'M FALLING *BEHIND!*

MAKE LIKE THE *TORCH*, KID-- *FAST!*

YOUR *FLAME* WILL SERVE AS YOUR *HARNESS!*

WE'VE GOT TO STAY *TO-GETHER!*

HEY! THERE'S SOME-ONE UP AHEAD!
IT'S THEM! QUICK--- DOWN BEHIND THOSE ROCKS!
REED! HOW CLOSE ARE WE TO THE ZONE OF ANTI-MATTER?
IT'S THE EXPLODING ATMOSPHERE WHERE NOTHING CAN LIVE!
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER!
FIRST, WE'VE GOT TO CAPTURE JANUS!
WELL? WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' ON?
QUIET! I WANT TO HEAR THEM--
THESE TWO OF MY COUNTLESS SUBJECTS SHALL TAKE YOU TO THE NEGA-POWER AREA.
WHY CAN'T I GO ALONE?
BECAUSE ONE MISSTEP WILL PLUNGE YOU IN-TO THE ANTI-MATTER ZONE!
AND I WANT YOU TO LIVE--- UNTIL YOU HAVE SHOWN ME-- THE WAY TO EARTH.
THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO KNOW.
HE STILL HASN'T TOLD HIM!
ATTACK!
CAN'T REACH JANUS! ANNIHILUS STOPPING ME -- WITH HIS RAY!
INTO THE SHIP, HUMAN! I SHALL HANDLE THIS.
NOT EVEN THE TORCH'S FIRE-BALLS CAN STOP ME NOW!

YOUR FLAME *OFFENDS* ME!
THUS-- LET IT BE *GONE!*
HE'S *DOUSING* MY FLAME-- WITH JUST *ONE* BLAST!
I--I'M *FALLING!*
THE KID AIN'T WEARIN' NO *HARNESS!*
IF HE FALLS FROM THAT HEIGHT--HE'S *DONE FOR!*
BEN!
IF YOU HADN'T *CAUGHT* ME--
YEAH, YEAH, I *KNOW!* STRETCHO WOULDA GAVE ME TWO *DEMERITS!*
HEADS UP, KID! OL' *SKULL FACE* IS LOSIN' HIS COOL!
--'N IF YA ASK *ME,* HE'S ALSO LOSIN' HIS *MARBLES!*
IF HE EXPECTS TA WHUMP *ME* BY TOSSIN' A CRUMMY *BOULDER---*
-- THEN HE OUGHTTA GO BACK TA *VILLAIN SCHOOL!*
HERE! RIGHT *BACK* ATCHA, CREEP!
FOOL! NOTHING CAN HARM THE *LORD* OF THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*
A FIELD OF *FORCE* GIVES ETERNAL *PROTECTION* TO ANNIHILUS--THE *LIVING DEATH THAT WALKS!*

WHILE, BACK AT THE VISI-SCREEN---

REED-- MY DARLING-- STAY AWAY FROM HIM!

HOW CAN YOU MATCH THE POWER OF--ANNIHILUS?

IT'S NO USE! HE CAN'T HEAR ME---

--AND IT WOULDN'T MATTER IF HE DID!

KRINGG!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

THE PHONE!

BUT WHO--AT A TIME LIKE THIS?

MRS. RICHARDS? THIS IS AGATHA HARKNESS.

LITTLE FRANKLIN AND I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.

THE BABY! BUT-- I'M SORRY! I--I CAN'T MAKE IT NOW!

MY DEAR GIRL-- DO YOU WISH TO DISAPPOINT YOUR OWN INFANT SON?

DO YOU THINK-- THAT'S ALL--- I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT?

MY HUSBAND-- MY BROTHER-- AND BEN-- ON THE VERGE OF DEATH--

AND SHE SCOLDS ME FOR MISSING AN APPOINTMENT!

BUT, EASY, SUE--GET HOLD OF YOURSELF.

I CAN'T GO TO PIECES NOW! I--I HAVE TO STAY--AT MY POST!

AND, JUST AS THE DISTRAUGHT GIRL CONTINUES TO WATCH---

JANUS-- MAKING GOOD HIS ESCAPE.

BUT, HE'S HEADING FOR--THE ANTI-MATTER ZONE!

IF HE ENTERS THE EXPLODING ATMO-SPHERE--- HE'S FINISHED!

BEN, I'M GOING AFTER HIM!

YOU AND JOHNNY HOLD ON!

WITHOUT ONE'A YER PEP TALKS?

THAT'S DOIN' IT THE HARD WAY!

I'VE GOT TO STOP ANNIHILUS -- BEFORE HIS BLASTS WEAR OUT POOR BEN!

EVEN IF I CAN'T HURT HIM -- IF I CAN JUST DISTRACT HIM:

I'LL INCREASE MY FLAME TO FULL INTENSITY--

AND HIT 'IM-- WITH EVERYTHING I'VE GOT!

IT'S WORKING! HE TURNED! HE'S FACING ME!

WATCH ME, HUMAN! SEE WHAT I THINK OF YOUR PUNY LITTLE POWERS!

--AND SEE WHAT I DO-- TO CRUSH THEM!

HE'S GONE! BUT--HE WAS HERE SECONDS AGO!

I ALWAYS TOLD YA TO DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT YER BREATH!

IN THE SPACE OF A SINGLE HEARTBEAT, I HAVE VANISHED-- AND RETURNED!

AND I HAVE BROUGHT-- MY COSMIC CONTROL ROD!

WATCH IT, BEN! WITH THAT GIZMO -- HE CAN DO ANY-THING!

THERE IS NO NEED FOR **ME** TO SULLY MY HANDS AGAINST YOU.

-- NOT WHEN I CAN SUMMON CREATURES SUCH AS **THIS** TO DO MY BIDDING!

HE USED THE **CONTROL ROD**-- TO SIGNAL FOR **HELP!**

HE SHOULDA WROTE A **LETTER** INSTEAD!

HEY! GITCHA CLAMMY **PAWS** OFFA ME!

OKAY, BUTTERCUP! DON'T SAY I DIDN'T **WARN** YA!

HOLD ME **CLOSER**, YA CRUMB-BUM--- SO'S I CAN **REACH** YA!

I'LL **FLATTEN** YA LIKE A BLASTED **PAN-CAKE!**

STAY **WITH** 'IM, BEN!

I'LL FLY BACK AND TACKLE **ANNIHILUS!**

OH **NO!** I WAS TOO **CARELESS!**

HE MANAGED TO **GRAB** ME-- WITH HIS **TAIL!**

BUT-- WHAT IS HE **MADE** OF?

HE DOESN'T EVEN SEEM TO **FEEL** MY FLAME!

KNOCK OFF THEM NUTTY *FIREBALLS*, KID!

ALL YER DOIN' IS *TOASTIN'* MY BACKSIDE!

THIS AIN'T GETTIN' US *NOWHERE!*

I CAN'T GIT *FREE* IF I CAN'T *REACH* 'IM!

BUT MEBBE THERE'S *ANOTHER* WAY!

EVER SINCE REED *FIXED* IT SO'S I CAN *CHANGE* MY-SELF--

IF I CONCENTRATE *HARD* ENUFF-- *FAST* ENUFF--

I'M-- NOT THE OVERSIZE *THING* ANY-MORE---

I'M *DOIN'* IT! I'M *DOIN'* IT!

I'M *BEN GRIMM* AGAIN-- AND *THIN* ENUFF--TO SLIP RIGHT THRU HIS *FINGERS!*

WITH THE *TORCH* STILL BUGGIN' 'IM--

--HE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT'S *HAPPENING* HERE!

IT *WORKED!* I'M *FREE!*

NOW ALL I GOTTA *DO* IS CHANGE *BACK*-- BACK TO THE *THING* AGAIN!

BUT, BEFORE THE FALLING BEN CAN FOCUS HIS THOUGHTS---

ONE OF THEM IS ESCAPING!

BUT HE CAN'T ELUDE THE VENGEANCE OF ANNIHILUS!

HE SAW ME! HE'S BLASTIN' AT ME!

GOTTA TAKE COVER-- BEHIND THOSE ROCKS!

HIDE, BEN-- HIDE!

WE'VE GOT TO HOLD OUT-- TILL REED GETS BACK!

SSSH!

AND, SPEAKING OF THE LEADER OF THE FABULOUS F.F. ---

JANUS IS SOMEWHERE IN THE HAZE AHEAD.

HE DOESN'T KNOW THE CHANCE HE'S TAKING!

THOUGH HE YET MAY FIND THE POWER HE SEEKS--

EVEN THAT CAN'T SAVE HIM-- FROM THE ANTI-MATTER ZONE!

HE'S GONE TOO FAR! HE MUST TURN BACK!

BUT, WITHIN THE CAREENING SHIP AHEAD---

FASTER, YOU GARGOYLES! FASTER, I SAY!

GET THAT LOOK OF FEAR OUT OF YOUR EYES!

YOU CAN'T FRIGHTEN ME!

YOU CAN'T KEEP ME FROM MY GOAL!

WE'RE REACHING THE CENTER OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE!

I'LL HARNESS MYSELF TO THE EXTENSION RAMP!

I MUST BE CLOSER-- CLOSER-- TO THE SOURCE OF POWER SUPREME!

IT'S BEGINNING! I CAN FEEL IT NOW!

THE NEGATIVE POWER IS FLOODING MY VERY BLOOD CELLS!

MORE! MORE! I MUST HAVE MORE!

THAT BURST OF ENERGY UP AHEAD--

IT CAN ONLY BE JANUS:

MAYBE THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO REACH HIM!

YOU'RE TRYING TO TRICK ME!

YOU'RE TRYING TO TURN THE SHIP!

IT'S ANNIHILUS FAULT! HE DOESN'T WANT MY POWER TO EXCEED HIS OWN!

BUT HE'S TOO LATE!

NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW!

I NEED NONE OF YOU ANY-MORE!

NOW TO RETURN-- --AND DESTROY ANNIHILUS.

AT LAST THE WORLD IS MINE-- MINE-- MINE!

KLIK!

BEHIND ME-- WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

I THOUGHT I HAD KILLED THEM BOTH!

THEY-- EJECTED ME! I'M FLYING INTO SPACE!

WHOOOSSH!

THE EXPLODING ATMOSPHERE!

HE'S PLUMMETING RIGHT INTO IT!

HE CAN'T DRAW BACK! THE GRAVITY'S TOO STRONG!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? I'M FALLING TOO FAST! HELP ME-- HELP!

YOUR HAND, JANUS -- REACH OUT TO ME! REACH, MAN -- REACH!

FALLING FASTER-- FASTER! CAN'T DO IT! I CAN'T!

EVEN WITH MY HARNESS-- I CAN'T MATCH--YOUR SPEED!

YOU'VE PASSED THE POINT OF-- NO RETURN!

I WANTED-- ABSOLUTE POWER! BUT-- NOT LIKE THIS!

NOT-- LIKE THIS!

HE'S CAUGHT IN THE ZONE OF ANTI-MATTER!

IT'S ALL OVER FOR HIM!

I DARE NOT GET ANY CLOSER!

IF I DON'T TURN BACK-- I'LL SHARE HIS FATE!

I HAVE TO JOIN BEN AND JOHNNY --FAST!

MY HARNESS FUEL IS ALMOST GONE!

BUT, AT LEAST ANNIHILUS STILL DOESN'T KNOW THE ROUTE TO EARTH!

AND, AS OUR AMAZING TALE NOW REACHES ITS ULTIMATE CLIMAX---

THAT BOULDER CANNOT SHIELD YOU FROM MY VENGEANCE!

I CAN SHATTER IT AT WILL!

AND SHATTER IT--I SHALL!

THAT'S WHAT I BEEN WAITIN' FOR!

SROK

I AIN'T EXACTLY A BEGINNER AT SHATTERIN' STUFF MYSELF!

BTOOK

THAT'LL HOLD 'IM LONG ENUFF FER ME TO GIT JUNIOR OFF THE HOOK!

HIS GRIP-- GROWING TIGHTER! CAN'T-- GET MY BREATH--EVERYTHING-- GOING BLACK--

EVEN--MY FLAME-- FADING---

C'MON, TORCHY BOY-- HANG IN THERE!

YA CAN'T TOSS IN THE TOWEL NOW, 'CAUSE---

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

OKAY, KID-- LET 'IM SLEEP IT OFF WHILE YOU'N ME FIND STRETCHO.

YOU WILL NEVER FIND ANYONE AGAIN!

ONLY YOUR DEATHS WILL ATONE FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

YOU CAN'T KILL THEM IF YOU CAN'T FIND THEM!

AND THESE IONIC STUN-BOLT BLASTS WILL GIVE THEM TIME TO GET AWAY!

JOHNNY! BEN! GET OVER HERE --FAST!

MOVE, YOU TWO! THIS GUN CAN'T FIRE FOREVER!

TOO BAD IT AIN'T BUILT LIKE HIS MOUTH!

C'MON, KID--YOU CAN MAKE IT!

EACH OF YOU TAKE A GYRO DEVICE---

THEY'LL GUIDE YOU HOME UN-ERRINGLY!

WHAT ABOUT YOU, BIG BRAIN?

I'LL HOLD HIM OFF--TILL YOU'RE SAFE!

THEY MUSN'T SUSPECT THAT I LOST MY HOMING DEVICE IN THE BATTLE!

WHICH MEANS-- I CAN'T RETURN!

FINALLY---

I KEPT LOOKIN' BACK FER *REED!*

WHERE IN BLAZES *IS* HE?

I DON'T *KNOW*, BEN.

HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN RIGHT *BEHIND* US!

JOHNNY! BEN! THANK *HEAVEN* YOU'RE SAFELY *BACK*, AT LAST!

I WUZ HOPIN' YA WOULDN'T ASK.

BUT-- WHERE'S *REED?* WHY ISN'T HE-- *WITH* YOU?

HE STAYED *BEHIND*, SIS-- TO COVER OUR *ESCAPE*--

HE'LL POP UP-- ANY *MINUTE.*

NO! IF HE WAS *HEADED* THIS WAY-- I'D HAVE *SEEN* HIM--

JUST AS I SAW *YOU.*

BUT LOOK-- *LOOK!* THERE ISN'T-- A *TRACE* OF HIM!

EVEN IF HE ESCAPES *ANNIHILUS*--HOW DO WE KNOW-- HE ISN'T DRIFTING *BACK?* BACK TO THE *EXPLOD-ING ATMOSPHERE!!*

THINK *KINDLY* OF ME, SUE MY DARLING--

I'M GIVING MY *LIFE*-- TO SAVE OUR WORLD--

NO MAN --COULD GIVE UP *MORE.*

NEXT:

.. AND THAT LEAVES THREE!

TRULY, A SHOCKER!

FANTASTIC FOUR

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

IT'S SHEER MARVEL MAGIC!

THE STORY WE HOPED NEVER TO PRINT...

ONE FROM FOUR LEAVES... THREE!

FOR THE FABULOUS F.F., HAS THE TIME REALLY COME--AT LAST?

ONE FROM FOUR LEAVES THREE!

LAST ISSUE WE SAW *THE THING* AND THE *HUMAN TORCH* SAFELY ESCAPE THE DEADLY *NEGATIVE ZONE*, WHILE THEIR LEADER -- *MR. FANTASTIC* -- REMAINED BEHIND, FACING AN ALMOST CERTAIN *DOOM*!

AND NOW, AS THE HELPLESS *REED RICHARDS* HURTLES TOWARDS THE *EXPLODING ATMOSPHERE*, LET US LEARN HIS FATE--

WITHOUT MY *GYRO DEVICE*, I CAN NEVER AGAIN RETURN TO EARTH--

--AND I GAVE IT TO *JOHNNY*-- SO THAT *HE* WOULD SURVIVE!

NOW, ALL I CAN DO IS *PRAY*-- WHILE I WAIT FOR THE *END*!

SOME WILL *LOVE* THIS TALE! SOME MAY *HATE* IT! BUT *THIS* WE DO *PROMISE* YOU-- *NONE* WILL *FORGET* IT!

STORY : STAN LEE

ART : J. BUSCEMA

EMBELLISHMENT: J. SINNOTT

LETTERING : M. STEVENS

560

BUT, EVEN *HERE*-- EVEN *NOW*-- I *CAN'T* GIVE UP! I *MUSTN'T* GIVE UP!

I STILL HAVE MY *BRAIN*--MY *WITS*! I CAN *FEEL*-- I CAN *THINK*!

I *MUST* THINK OF SOMETHING--*ANYTHING*-- IN THE NEXT FEW SECONDS!

I CAN'T LET MYSELF *DIE*-- THE WAY *JANUS* DIED!

"*ALL* HE WANTED WAS *POWER*-- THE POWER HE COULD SEIZE FROM THE *NEGATIVE ZONE*--"

AT LAST, THE WORLD IS *MINE*!

"BUT THEN-- HE WAS *EJECTED* FROM HIS SHIP--*FLUNG* TOWARDS THE *ZONE OF ANTI-MATTER*--"

I'M FLYING INTO *SPACE*!

"*EVIL* THOUGH HE WAS, I *STILL* TRIED TO SAVE HIM--"

REACH, MAN-- *REACH*!

I *CAN'T*! I *CAN'T*!

"AND THEN, IT WAS *OVER*--"

HE'S FALLEN TOO *FAR*! HE'S *FINISHED*!

AND NOW--I'M DESTINED TO *SHARE* HIS FATE!

EVEN *ANNIHILUS* WON'T PURSUE ME *THIS* CLOSE TO THE *EXPLODING ATMOSPHERE*!

HE'S STILL *BACK* THERE-- WATCHING AND GLOATING, AND *WAITING*-- FOR ME TO *DIE*!

I'VE *WON*-- AT *LAST*!

BUT, AT LEAST HE NEVER *FOUND* THE PATHWAY TO *EARTH!*

AND HE NEVER *WILL!*

THE *GYRO DEVICE* HE GAVE ME--IT MUST HAVE BEEN HIS *OWN!*

THEN-- HE CAN *NEVER* RETURN!

IT MEANS-- MY HUSBAND MUST *DIE!*

ALL ALONE-- IN ANOTHER *DIMENSION*-- HE'LL SOON BE-- BLOWN TO BITS!

BEN! DON'T JUST *SIT* THERE!

THERE MUST BE *SOME-THING* WE CAN DO!

FERGET IT! AINT NO WAY WE COULD *REACH* 'IM IN TIME!

HE *KNEW* THE RISK!

HE SHOULDN'TA GONE AFTER *JANUS!*

BUT *HIM*-- HE HADDA BE A *HERO!*

THEY'RE PROBABLY *WATCHING* ME-- ON THE *VISI-SCANNER!*

I KNOW--HOW *HOPELESS* THEY MUST FEEL!

AND *SUE!* WHEN I THINK OF *HER*--

NO! I *WON'T* THINK OF HER!

I'LL THINK OF *NOTHING*-- BUT *ESCAPE!*

BUT *TIME'S* RUNNING OUT!

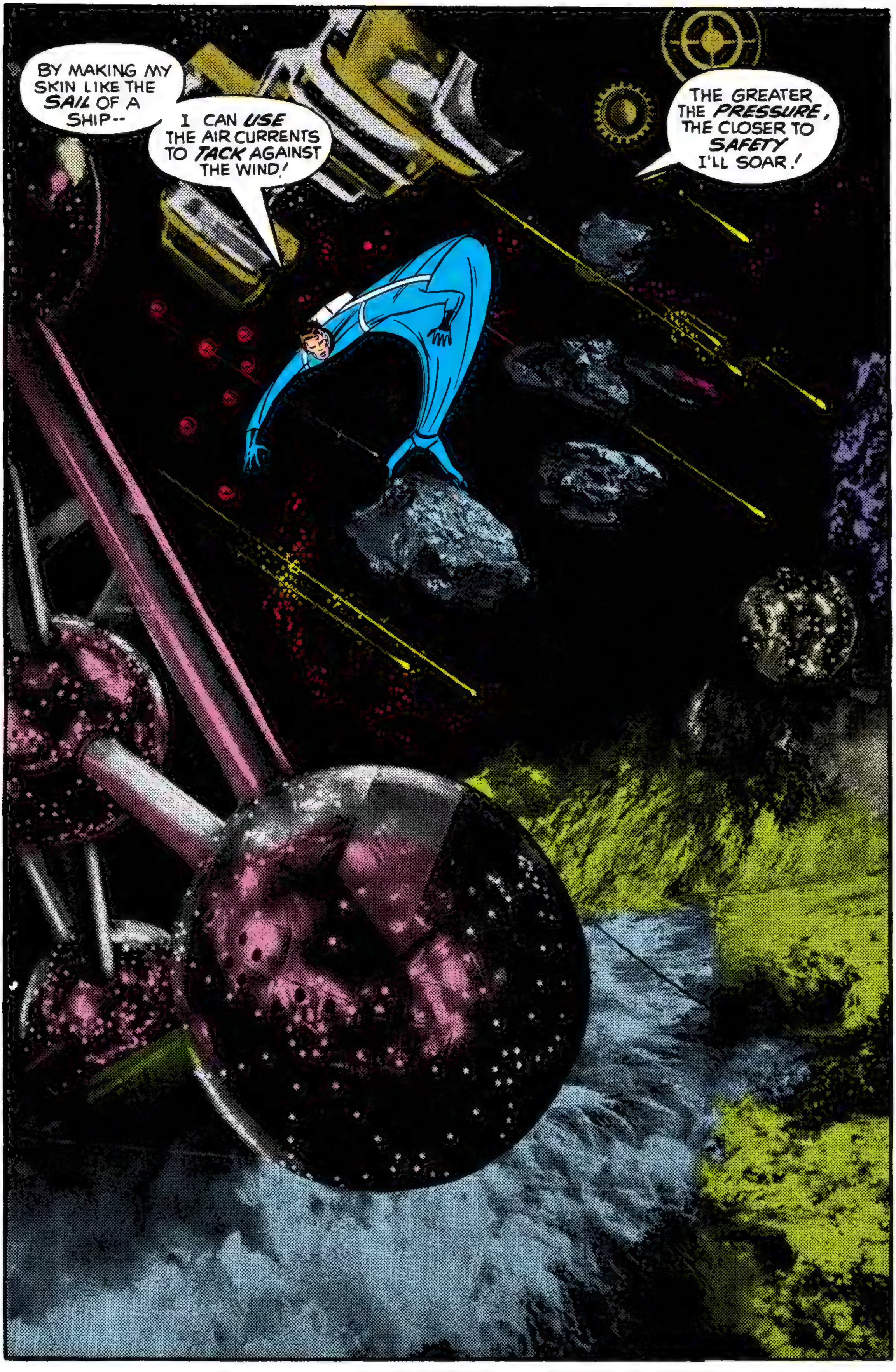
MY SPEED IS *INCREASING!* SOON *NOTHING* WILL STOP ME--

NO-- *WAIT!* WAIT!

THE POWER TO *STRETCH*-- TO ALTER MY *SHAPE!*

I HAVE THE *POWER*-- WITHIN MY OWN *BODY!*

THE REASON THEY *CALL* ME-- *MR. FANTASTIC!*


BY MAKING MY SKIN LIKE THE SAIL OF A SHIP--
I CAN USE THE AIR CURRENTS TO TACK AGAINST THE WIND!
THE GREATER THE PRESSURE, THE CLOSER TO SAFETY I'LL SOAR!

IT'S *WORKING*! I'M GLIDING *BACK*-- BACK AGAINST THE TIDE!

BUT, IT'S ONLY A *TEMPORARY* MEASURE!

I CAN'T KEEP TACKING *FOREVER*!

AND THE *FURTHER* I GET FROM THE *EXPLODING* ATMO-SPHERE--

THE *CLOSER* I COME TO-- *ANNIHILUS*!

THE *MORE* HE STRUGGLES--

THE *GREATER* WILL BE MY *VICTORY*!

FOR, IF HE DOES *NOT* MEET HIS DEATH IN THE *ANTI-MATTER ZONE* --

HE WILL MEET IT IN *ANOTHER* WAY--

--AT THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO *WAIT*--TO *SERVE* ME!

BUT, THE *LONGER* IT TAKES--

THE GREATER THE CHANCE OF *OTHERS* COMING--TO *SAVE* HIM!

AND *THAT* IS WHAT I MOST *DESIRE*!

FOR, ABOVE *ALL*, I MUST FIND THE PATH-WAY TO *EARTH*--

AND *ONE* OF THEM WILL SURELY *LEAD* ME THERE!

EVEN IF WE *COULD* HELP HIM, SIS--

ANNIHILUS IS STILL THERE -- *WAITING!*

REED *KNEW* THAT-- BETTER THAN *ANYONE!*

REED! REED! REED! TALK! TALK! *TALK!*

I CAN'T *STOMACH* NO MORE!

NONE OF US EVER FIGGERED TO LIVE *FOREVER!*

SO *REED'S* CASHIN' IN *FIRST!* OKAY? OKAY!

THAT MEANS WE'LL BE NEEDIN' A NEW *LEADER*--

AND *I KNOW* WHO IT BETTER *BE!*

BUT, IN CASE THEY DON'T FEEL LIKE *ELECTIN'* NO ORANGE-SKINNED *MONSTER*--

I'LL MAKE SURE THAT I'M *STILL* IN THE RUNNIN'--

NOW THAT I GOT ME THE POWER TA *CHANGE*, JUST BY *THINKIN'* ABOUT IT--

IF THEY WON'T VOTE FER THE *THING*--

THEY BETTER VOTE FER *BEN GRIMM!*

BZZZZ

WHO'S *THAT* AT THE BUZZER?

OH, THE *HARKNESS* DAME-- WITH SUE'S *KID!*

MIGHT AS WELL LET HER *IN!*

CLICK

MISS HARKNESS! Y-YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE JUST NOW!

LITTLE FRANKLIN WANTED TO SEE HIS MOTHER!

I KNOW MY DUTY, YOUNG MAN!

AND WHERE IS MISTER RICHARDS?

FRANKLIN -- DARLING -- HOW CAN I TELL YOU? HOW WILL I MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND?

HEY, HIS MIDDLE NAME IS BEN, AIN'T IT?

HOW'S ABOUT USIN' IT SOME-TIME, HUH?

BEN! IS THAT ALL YOU CAN THINK OF -- WITH REED FACING DEATH -- IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE?

OH -- I SEE I HAVE ARRIVED AT A MOST INOPPORTUNE TIME!

I'LL TAKE THE CHILD BACK, MY DEAR!

WHAT'S WITH YA, SUE? YER GOIN' ALL TO PIECES!

YA KNEW THE KINDA BUSINESS WE'RE IN -- THE CHANCES WE GOTTA TAKE!

BEN -- I NEVER HEARD YOU SO COLD -- SO UNFEELING!

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN -- THAT YOU WERE REED'S BEST FRIEND?

WHO YOU KIDDIN', LADY?

I WAS HIS STOOGE -- AN' YOU KNOW IT!

BUT WITH HIM GONE, IT'LL BE DIFFERENT 'ROUND HERE!

HOW CAN YOU TALK LIKE THAT?

HAVE YOU NO FEELINGS -- NO HEART?

AFTER HIM GIVING HIS LIFE -- FOR YOU AND JOHNNY!

I HATE YOU, BEN GRIMM! I HATE YOU -- HATE YOU!

NOBODY DOES THAT TA ME!

YA HEAR THAT, LADY--?

NOBODY!

I'M THRU BEIN' A PATSY FER THE STORM FAMILY!

I'M THRU BEIN' PUSHED AROUND -- DOIN' ALL YER DIRTY WORK -- 'N GITTIN' A PAT ON THE HEAD IF I'M GOOD!

IF YOU WUZN'T A FEMALE, I'D-- I'D--

YOU'D WHAT?!!

JOHNNY-- NO!

WELL, WELL-- LISTEN TA THE HOT SHOT!

GET OUT, YOU CREEP!

IF NOT FOR SUE, I'D--

DON'T, JOHNNY! IT'S NOT HIS FAULT! REMEMBER WHAT REED SAID--

THAT LAST EXPERIMENT-- WHICH GAVE HIM THE POWER TO CHANGE-- IT AFFECTED HIM SOMEHOW!

YOU'RE *RIGHT!* THAT'S WHY HE'S BEEN ACTING *DIFFERENT!*

BUT WE CAN'T WORRY ABOUT *HIM* NOW-- THERE'S STILL *REED!*

HEY! I'VE GOT AN *IDEA!*

WE'RE GOIN' *BACK*-- INTO THE *NEGATIVE ZONE!*

LEAVE US, MRS. HARKNESS! TAKE THE BABY TO *SAFETY!*

IF THERE'S A *CHANCE* TO SAVE REED--

OF *COURSE,* MRS. STORM!

HE MIGHT *STILL* MAKE IT BACK-- IF HE HAD THIS *GYRO DEVICE!*

BUT--HOW CAN WE *GET* IT TO HIM?

AND WHAT OF *ANNIHILUS?* HE'S STILL *OUT* THERE-- *WAITING!*

YOU DON'T HAVE TO *TELL* ME!

BUT *REED* WOULD TRY *ANYTHING*-- FOR *US!*

OKAY! NOW IT'S *OUR* TURN!

CAREFUL, SIS! THIS IS THE *FINAL* CHAMBER!

NOW, *COVER* YOUR EYES! THIS'LL BE *BLINDING!*

I'M ENCASING THE *GYRO DEVICE* IN A COCOON OF *INTENSIFIED FLAME!*

HOT ENOUGH TO *PROTECT* IT--

--WITHOUT MAKING IT *MELT!*

OKAY NOW! THIS IS GONNA BE TRICKY!

WHEN WE'RE IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE, YOU'LL HAVE TO SHIELD ME WITH YOUR INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD--

AND I'LL FIND A WAY-- TO GET THIS TO REED!

YOU WON'T HAVE A CHANCE-- WITHOUT ME!

WHO--?

IT'S BEN! HE'S BACK!

I OUGHTTA HAVE MY HEAD EXAMINED FER DOIN' THIS!

SHE CAN'T HELP YOU 'LESS SOME-ONE'S HOLDIN' ONTO HER--

AND I'M THAT SOMEONE!

ANYWAY, THIS'LL PROVE WHICH OF US SHOULD BE THE NEXT LEADER O' THIS TEAM!

LET'S GO!

THIS IS IT!

READY, JOHNNY!

HANG ON!

WE MUSTN'T SLIP PAST THE ZONE OF DISTORTION!

IF WE DO-- THERE'LL BE NO GETTING BACK!

AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT! I GOTCHA! I GOTCHA GOOD!

NOW WHAT'RE YA GONNA DO?

I'M ALMOST THRU THE DISTORTION AREA, SUE!

OH GOD-- LET THERE BE TIME!

YOUR FORCE FIELD! PUT IT AROUND ME QUICK!

PLEASE-- PLEASE! LET THERE STILL BE TIME!

NOW! LET DOWN YOUR FIELD-- FAST!
JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO TOSS ONE PITCH!
THERE! IT'S HEADED TOWARDS REED!
ONLY THE TORCH COULD HAVE HURLED IT!
A FIERY PELLET-- STREAKING THRU THE AIR!
I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM--
HE MUST SHOW ME THE WAY TO EARTH!
WITH MY WEAPONS-- MY POWERS-- ALL MANKIND WILL BE AT MY MERCY!
ANNIHILUS! HE'S SEARCHING THE SKY!
BEN! PULL ME BACK-- BEFORE HE SEES US!
OKAY! OKAY! I HEAR YA!
BUT THE GRAVITY'S TOO BLASTED STRONG!
FASTER, BEN! FASTER!

BEN-- HURRY! I--CAN'T HOLD HIM--MUCH LONGER!

AWRIGHT! BOTH OF YA-- HANG ON!

HERE GOES NOTHIN'!

YOU DID IT!

WE'RE HURTLING BACK--INTO THE CHAMBER-- BEFORE HE SPOTTED US!

NOW WHAT?

WE HAVE TO TURN ON THE VIEWER--

SO WE CAN SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING TO REED!

EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON MY FLAME MISSILE REACHING HIM!

CLICK!

SECONDS LATER, A GRIPPING SCENE COMES INTO VIEW--

HE'S STILL FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE!

WHAT IF--WE FAILED?

HE DIDN'T GET YER GIZMO!

NO.! LOOK-- THERE IT IS.!
REED SEES IT.!
A FLAME BOLT.! IT'S SOMETHING FROM--THE TORCH.!
IT HALTED-- AFFECTED BY MY HUMAN AURA.!
THE FLAMES ARE PARTING.! THERE'S SOMETHING WITHIN---
IT'S THE GYRO DEVICE! I'VE GOT IT.!
THEY-- FOUND A WAY-- TO SAVE ME.!
BUT NO.! IT WON'T HELP! I DARE NOT USE IT.!
ANNIHILUS IS STILL OUT THERE-- WATCHING-- WAITING.!
HIS SAVAGE HORDE HAS ALREADY SPIED ME.!
MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO CONCEAL MYSELF--
TO OUTSMART THEM SOMEHOW.!

IT'S NO USE! THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM!
THEY'VE ALERTED ANNIHILUS! HE'S BLASTING AT ME!
I'VE GOT TO STRETCH--
GOT TO BE THE THINNEST TARGET!
HE CAN'T ESCAPE ME NOW! I'LL GET HIM!
AND THEN-- I'LL MAKE HIM LEAD ME TO EARTH!
MISS HARNESS.. YOU'RE STILL HERE!
TAKE SUE AWAY! DON'T LET HER TORTURE HERSELF LIKE THIS!
NO! NO! I MUST STAY! I MUST SEE-- WHAT HAPPENS!
THERE IS ALSO SOMETHING THAT I MUST DO---
LISTEN TO ME, BOTH OF YOU-- FOR TIME IS SHORT---
I WANT YOU TO GET ME A CANDLE.. AND A PIECE OF CHALK!
BUT, WHAT--?
NO TIME FOR QUESTIONS! PERHAPS I CAN SAVE YOUR HUSBAND!
C'MON SUE! WE'VE NOTHING TO LOSE!
AND SO---
YOU ARE TO MAKE NO SOUND--
NO MATTER WHAT YOU SEE OR HEAR!
LET CANDLE GLOW--
LET SHADOWS GROW--

HIGHER, *HIGHER*, MYSTIC FIRE--

I CRY THE *NAME* NO EAR CAN *HEAR!*

NOW *BLOW* YE WIND-- I STAND *UNBOWED!*

FOR I AM CLOAKED IN *SHADE AND SHROUD!*

SOMETHING'S *HAPPENING*--

I CALL THE *SOURCE* OF TIMELESS *FEAR!*

IT'S LIKE-- A GIANT *CYCLONE!*

A FAT LOTTA GOOD *THIS'LL* DO!

OUR *ROOM!* IT'S *SHAKING*-- *THROBBING*-- *GLOWING* WITH MYSTIC *FORCE!*

KEEP *BACK!* BE *SILENT!* IT WILL GROW MUCH *WORSE!*

AND, IN THE *STREETS* NEARBY--

56 ST.

WHAT *IS* IT? AN EARTHQUAKE?

EVEN AT THE OFFICE OF THE *DAILY BUGLE*--

WHAT IN SAM HILL'S GOING *ON* HERE?

SOMEONE SHUT THAT *FAN* OFF!

IT'S NO *FAN, JJ!* THERE'S A *TORNADO* OUT THERE!

TORNADO? WE DON'T *HAVE* TORNADOS IN NEW YORK!

OKAY, IT'S A *FAN!* THEN *YOU* SHUT IT OFF!

IT MUST BE THE WORK OF THOSE CRUDDY COMMIE *RADICAL LIBERALS!*

DON'T SMART-MOUTH *ME*, MISTER!

TELL ME SOMETHING-- WHO WOULD YOU HAVE BLAMED THE *ICE AGE* ON?

IT'S COMING FROM THE *BAXTER BUILDING!* THAT MEANS THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* ARE UP TO SOMETHING!

THOSE *TROUBLE-MAKERS* SHOULD BE RUN OUT OF *TOWN!*

I HATE *ALL* COSTUMED *DO-GOODERS!*

WHO *NEEDS* 'EM, ANYWAY?

WELL, *ANNIHILUS*, FOR *ONE*--

HE'S *EXHAUSTED!* HE CAN'T ESCAPE! *CLOSE IN! SEIZE HIM!*

CAN'T-- HOLD OUT-- ANY LONGER!

HAVE TO-- *CONTRACT* MY BODY! THE STRAIN IS TOO *GREAT!*

NO! NO! I MUST BE GOING *MAD*-- LOSING MY *MIND!*

IT--- CAN'T *BE!* *IT CAN'T!*

THE SKY IS *FILLED* WITH-- *ME!*

THERE ARE *MILLIONS* OF FIGURES! *MILLIONS!*

WHEREVER I LOOK-- I SEE MY *VICTIM!*

BUT HOW DO I KNOW ONE *REAL?*

I CAN'T CAPTURE THEM *ALL!*

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT *HAPPENED*-- BUT IT'S MY *ONE* CHANCE TO *ESCAPE!*

ANNIHILUS WILL *NEVER* FIND ME NOW!

THE ENTRANCE TO EARTH IS *SAFE!*

MY DARLING--MY *DARLING!* MISS HARKNESS' SPELL *WORKED!* IT BROUGHT YOU *BACK!*

SO *THAT'S* WHAT IT WAS---

REED! IT'S LIKE A *MIRACLE!*

WHAT'S ALL THAT FLAK ABOUT ONE CRUMMY *SPELL?*

YA'D BE PUSHIN' UP *DAISIES* NOW IF I DIDN'T HOLD *ONTA* THEM TWO WHEN *HOTSHOT* TOSSED YER GIZMO ATCHA!

BEN! I-- JUST CAME OVER-- TO LEARN WHAT HAD *HAPPENED!*

I NEVER HEARD YOU *SPEAK* THAT WAY BEFORE!

ALICIA!

MEBBE IT'S TIME YA *DID* HEAR ME LIKE THIS, LADY!

BEN! WHAT-- WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING?*

MEBBE I *HAD* IT WITH MAKIN' LIKE *MR. NICE GUY* FOR YA!

WANT ME TA *SPELL* IT OUT? OKAY!

I DON'T *NEEDJA* ANYMORE! DON'T WANTCHA HANGIN' *AROUND!* I CAN DO LOTS *BETTER* NOW-- *DIG?*

NOW THAT I CAN MAKE MYSELF *NORMAL* ANY TIME I WANT, I DON'T HAVETA BE A *FREAK* NO MORE!

WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING?*

THAT MEANS I CAN HAVE MY *PICK* O' CHICKS!

LET *ME* HAVE HIM, REED!

SAY *ONE* MORE WORD TO THAT GIRL, YOU *SLUG*, AND I'LL--

YOU'LL *NOTHIN'!!*

JOHNNY! STAY *OUT* OF IT!

I'M *THRU* BEIN' PUSHED AROUND!

LUCKY FER *YOU* HE YANKED YA OUTTA THE WAY!

LEMME *GO*, REED! LET *GO* OR I'LL BURN *YOU*, TOO!

THIS IS THE *PAYOFF!*

FLAME ON!

NO, JOHNNY-- *NO!*

BEN DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S *DOING!*

I *DON'T*, HUH?

STAND *STILL*, YA PUNK!

NUTS! IF YA KEEP *DODGIN'* ME, I'LL BRING THE WHOLE *JOINT* DOWN AROUND YA!

PLEASE, JOHNNY-- LET *ME* TRY TO STOP HIM--WITHOUT ANYONE GETTING *HURT!*

BUT *HOW*, SUE?

BY *INVISIBILITY!*

HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

I CAN'T SEE MY PAW!

MY WHOLE BODY'S STARTIN' TO FADE!

THERE'S NOTHIN' LEFT O' ME-- 'CEPTIN' MY HEAD!

SUE! YA TURNED YER POWER OF INVISIBILITY ON ME!

AWRIGHT-- I AIN'T GONNA FIGHT IT OUT WITH A FEMALE!

TURN ME BACK-- AND I'LL SPLIT OUTTA HERE!

BEN-- NOBODY WANTS YOU TO GO!

WHAT DO I CARE WHAT ANYONE WANTS?

IF I NEVER SEE ANY OF YA AGAIN--

IT'LL BE TOO SOON!

SLAM

LET 'IM GO! WHO NEEDS HIM?

WE NEED HIM, JOHNNY-- AND WE ALL KNOW IT!

BUT OUR NEED FOR HIM ISN'T THE BIG PROBLEM--

-- HE'S OUT OF CONTROL! WHEN NEXT WE MEET, IT MAY BE AS-- ENEMIES!

BEN KNOWS ALL OUR SECRETS-- ALL OUR FIGHTING PLANS!

THAT, PLUS HIS STRENGTH, WOULD MAKE HIM--

UNBEATABLE!

NEXT

THE THING RUNS AMOK!

FANTASTIC FOUR

15¢ CC

111 JUNE

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four

TW

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

THE THING'S GONE MAD!

THERE'S NO STOPPING HIM!

THE THING RUNS AMOK!

THE FABULOUS F.F. FACE THEIR MOST DREADED DISASTER!

THE THING...AMOK!

MY EXPERIMENT ON THE THING BACKFIRED!

EVEN THOUGH HE NOW CAN CHANGE HIS FORM AT WILL---

--HE'S OUT OF CONTROL! HE'S LOSING HIS CONSCIENCE! BEN GRIMM IS TURNING--- BAD!

HE'S LOOSE IN THE STREETS NOW-- AND CAPABLE OF ANYTHING!

ONE WAY

MOVE IT!

WHEN THE THING WANTS TA CROSS ---TRAFFIC BETTER STOP!

THUMK!

1X110

NOBODY'S EVER PUSHIN' ME AROUND NO MORE! NOT NOBODY!

STORY and ART:
STAN LEE | JOHN BUSCEMA
JOE SINNOTT INKER | SAM ROSEN LETTERER

WITH THIS EPIC ISSUE, MIGHTY MARVEL MARCHES TO NEW AND GREATER GLORY!

586 Z

HE'S *OUT* THERE, JOHNNY-- *SOMEWHERE!*

AND, WHEN WE MEET-- IT MAY BE AS-- *ENEMIES!*

BUT, HE KNOWS ALL OUR *SECRETS*.. OUR *BATTLE PLANS!*

DON'T BOTHER *SPELLING* IT OUT, REED.

I CAN *SEE* IT'S PRETTY HAIRY.

I'M *THRU* BEIN' THE HEAD *FALL GUY* FER THE BLASTED *FANTASTIC FOUR.*

FROM NOW ON, THE THING LOOKS AFTER *NUMBER ONE.*

VOTE FOR

OKAY! LET 'ER *DOWN.*

EASY NOW-- *EASY...*

HEY! WHO THE--??

BREAK IT UP! *BREAK IT UP!*

QUIT BLOCKIN' THE *SIDEWALK* WIT'CHER LITTLE TIN *TINKER-TOYS!*

WE MIGHT'A *KNOWN!* IT'S THE LOUD-MOUTH *THING.*

YOU MAY BE A REAL *HOT SHOT* COME *HALLOWE'EN*.. BUT YOU DON'T PUSH *US* AROUND, SEE?

C'MON! LET'S KNOCK 'IM *OUT* FROM UNDER THEM ORANGE *LUMPS!*

YA *KNOW* SOMETHIN'? YOU CREEPS'RE AS DUMB AS YA *LOOK!*

WHO D'YA THINK YER MESSIN' *AROUND* WITH-- A REFUGEE FROM *SESAME STREET?*

KRRUNNCH!

I COULD TAKE A *HUNDRED* PUNKS LIKE YOU-- 'N *CHEW* 'EM UP BEFORE BREAKFAST!

BUT JUST IN CASE YA THINK I'M *KIDDIN'*--

WHA-- WHAT'S HE GONNA *DO?*

I AIN'T MADE UP MY *MIND* YET.

BUT DON'T *WORRY*--- IT AIN'T LIKELY TO BE NOTHIN' *DULL.*

HEY-- SINCE THIS *CRANE'S* JUST STANDIN' AROUND, DOIN' *NOTHIN'*!--

HERE'S MY CHANCE TO *SHOW* YA THAT I AIN'T REALLY *MAD*--

FFTTYNNGUGU!

THINK WHAT YA'D *PAY* FER A RIDE LIKE THAT--AT *CONEY ISLAND!*

SPLUNK!

OKAY! THAT'S ALL FER *YOU* GUYS.

THERE'S STILL A COUPLE OF *OTHERS* WAITIN' FER THEIR TURN!

OH *NO!!* HE--HE MEANS *US!*

DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE, YA JERK!

LET'S GET *OUTTA* HERE -- WHILE WE *CAN!*

IF THERE'S *ONE* THING TURNS ME *OFF*--

--IT'S AN *UN-FRIENDLY* HARD-HAT!

HERE I GO TO *ALL* THIS TROUBLE--

--JUST TO BE *SOCIABLE*--

AN' YA DON'T EVEN WANNA *PLAY* NO MORE!

HE'S *CRAZY!* THERE'S NO *REASONIN'* WITH 'IM!

HE'LL END UP *KILLIN'* SOMEONE!

CONCERT FEB. 6-9

SAVE YER *BREATH!* JUST KEEP *RUNNIN'!*

NOBODY COPS OUT ON THE BLUE-EYED *THING!*

WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S *HAPPEN-ING?*

IT--- IT'S THE *THING!*

HE'S RUNNING *AMOK*--ATTACK-ING THOSE POOR *MEN!*

CLEAR THE STREET! EVERYBODY BACK!

SAM! WHAT D'YA *MAKE* OF IT? WHAT GOT INTO THE *THING?*

I *DUNNO*-- BUT THEY BETTER SEND THE *RIOT SQUAD!*

IF *HE'S* GONE BANANAS-- *LOOK OUT!*

NUTS! IT'S THE FUZZ.! THEY PROBABLY RADIOED FER THEIR BIG GUNS AWREDDY!

I CAN PROBABLY HOLD 'EM ALL OFF--

BUT IT AIN'T WORTH IT.

I AIN'T NO BLASTED DUMMY! I AIN'T ABOUT TO GIT SHOT AT-- FER NOTHIN'!!

WHEN THE TIME COMES FER ME TO LAY IT ON THE LINE, I GOTTA BE SURE THERE'S A PAY-OFF!

GIMME THAT COAT YER WEARIN', MISTER! I NEED IT MORE'N YOU DO.

NOW, ALL I GOTTA DO IS MAKE IT AROUND THE CORNER.

HURRY! HURRY! HE WENT THAT WAY-- RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER.

YEAH, YEAH! WE GOT EYES, FELLA.

DON'T USE YOUR GUN, SAM.

IT WON'T STOP THE THING.

WE JUST GOTTA TAIL 'IM.

MADE IT!

NOW, ALL I GOTTA DO IS CHANGE FAST ENOUGH--

RICHARDS FIXED IT SO ALL IT TAKES IS A THOUGHT --LIKE THIS.

ONE'A THESE DAYS I GOTTA THANK 'IM FOR THE FAVOR---

BUT THAT'LL BE AFTER I MOP UP THE FLOOR WITH 'IM!

HEY, FELLA-- DID YOU SEE THE THING RUN PAST HERE?

YOU KIDDIN'? WHO COULD MISS THAT UGLY FREAK?

HE RAN DOWN THE BLOCK-- TOWARDS THE SUBWAY.

YOU HEARD THE MAN, LEW! LET'S GO!

MUCH OBLIGED.

DON'T MENTION IT, PAL!

ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO HELP THE LAW.

MEANWHILE, ATOP THE TOWERING BAXTER BUILDING--

I'M GOING AFTER HIM, REED! I HAVE TO.

ALL RIGHT, JOHNNY! PERHAPS IT'S BEST YOU DO.

BUT JUST KEEP HIM UNDER OBSERVATION!

DON'T TANGLE WITH HIM.

WHO'RE YOU WORRIED ABOUT? HIM --OR ME?

BOTH OF YOU! DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT--

TOO LATE! HE DIDN'T WANT TO LISTEN.

I JUST HOPE AND PRAY-- THAT THE TORCH DOESN'T FIND HIM.

BECAUSE, IF IT COMES TO A FIGHT--

MR. RICHARDS, I'M SURE IT WON'T BREAK YOUR HEART IF I WERE TO RETURN HOME NOW.

NONSENSE, MISS HARKNESS! YOU KNOW YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME HERE.

ESPECIALLY AFTER SAVING REED'S LIFE.*

I'VE NEVER REALLY THANKED YOU---

*IT HAPPENED LAST ISH, IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE! -- SINCERE STAN.

SOMEHOW, I THINK MISS HARKNESS KNOWS HOW GRATEFUL WE ARE.

FIDDLESTICKS, CHILD! ANYONE WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING.

I'M STILL NOT SURE-- HOW YOU DID IT.

THAT'S JUST AS WELL.

BUT NOW, IF YOU'LL GET THE *BABY*--

REED, DO YOU MIND IF *I* GO, TOO?

LITTLE *FRANKLIN* HAS BEEN *AWAY* FROM US FOR *SO* LONG--

FIRST, COME *HERE* A MINUTE, SUE.

I KNOW HOW *DIFFICULT* IT'S BEEN FOR YOU, HONEY-- WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN *HAPPENING*.

I *PROMISE* YOU, WHEN ALL OF THIS IS *OVER*---

YOU DON'T HAVE TO *SAY* IT, DARLING. IT'S -- THE LIFE WE *CHOSE* FOR OURSELVES.

THE BEST CHOICE I EVER *MADE* WAS -- PICKING *YOU* FOR MY WIFE.

OH, REED-- REED--

MINUTES LATER---

I'LL *JOIN* YOU, SUE -- I *SWEAR* IT! AS SOON AS *BEN* IS HIMSELF AGAIN.

BEN-- *BEN!* THE BEST FRIEND A MAN EVER *HAD!*

HE DESERVED SO MUCH *BETTER* THAN THE HAND *FATE* DEALT HIM.

-- SO MUCH *MORE* THAN *I* DID FOR HIM.

I'VE SPENT *YEARS* SEEKING A WAY TO CHANGE HIM BACK TO *NORMAL*...

AND THEN, JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I *HAD* IT---

"SOMETHING WENT *WRONG*-- TRAGICALLY *DESPERATELY* WRONG!"

"HE GOT THE POWER TO *CHANGE AT WILL*-- BUT, SOMETHING *INSIDE* HIM WAS CHANGING AS WELL--"

I'M *BEN GRIMM* AGAIN! I'M NOT A *MONSTER* ANYMORE!

"HE WAS SO *THRILLED*, SO *EXCITED*, I HADN'T THE HEART TO *TELL* HIM--"

IT'S GREAT-- *GREAT!* I CAN CHANGE JUST BY *WILLING* IT!

"IT WAS WITH A *HEAVY* HEART THAT I WATCHED HIM *LEAVE*--- FOR I *KNEW* WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT BRING--"

THE *PERSONALITY CHANGE* WILL START SLOWLY-- THEN GET FASTER --*FASTER*--

"AND I WAS *RIGHT!* EACH PASSING MINUTE MADE HIM MORE *VIOLENT*--"

OUTTA MY *WAY*, OR I'LL CLOBBER YA *ALL!*

NOW HE'S *OUT* THERE SOMEWHERE --ALONE AND BITTER---

AND, WITH ALL MY *KNOWLEDGE* --ALL MY *SKILL* --I'M *POWERLESS* TO HELP HIM.

--BASED ON EVENTS DEPICTED IN ISSUES 107-110--*STAN.*

MAYBE REED'S GETTING TOO *OLD.*

HE WASTES TIME *THINKING*-- WHILE THE *THING'S* RUNNING LOOSE.

BUT, MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL--

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN *HANDLE* HIM.

I ALWAYS LOVED HIM LIKE A *BROTHER* --*BETTER* THAN A BROTHER.

BUT HE'S NOT OL' *BASHFUL BENJY* ANYMORE---

HE'S BECOME A *STRANGER* --A MENACE WHO JUST HATES THE *WORLD!*

DRINK Pep

AND I'VE GOTTA *FIND* HIM-- BEFORE IT'S *TOO LATE!*

WHILE, ON THE STREET BELOW---

WOW! LOOK UP THERE-- IN THE SKY!

THE TORCH! HE MUST BE AFTER ME.

I'LL TEACH THAT HALF-PINT PUNK!

NO PARKING MON-FRI

IT AIN'T GONNA BE OPEN SEASON ON THE THING NO MORE!

WHEN I'M DONE WITH HIM, THERE WON'T BE ENOUGH LEFT TO TOAST A BLASTED MARSHMELLA!

JUST STAY WHERE YA ARE, HOT STUFF--

THIS AIN'T GONNA TAKE LONG.

NO PARKING

HE'S SLOWIN' DOWN! HE SEES ME.

WELL, THAT'S HIS TOUGH LUCK.

I KNEW IT!

HE'S AS DANGEROUS AS WE FEARED.

BUT NO ONE EVER CALLED THE HUMAN TORCH A PUSHOVER, EITHER!

LOOK OUT!

THAT MOLTEN POLE--JUST MISSED ME!

I'VE --GOT TO BE CAREFUL! IF AN INNOCENT BY-STANDER GETS HURT---

BEN-- DON'T! LET'S TALK!

RAPPIN' AIN'T EXACTLY MY LINE, JUNIOR--

THAT'S IT, CREEP! KEEP COMIN'--JUST A LITTLE CLOSER--

NOW!

KLOK!

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, BIG MAN.

I CAN MELT THIS STUFF FAST AS YOU SLING IT!

BUT, AT THIS RATE, WE'LL TEAR HALF THE CITY APART!

JUST STAY WHERE YA ARE, RUNT.

--'CAUSE YER ONLY A FEW SECONDS AWAY FROM CLOBBERIN' TIME!

YOU'VE HAD IT, MAN!

YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING ON YANCY STREET NOW! THIS IS FOR REAL!

FIRE BALLS! ALL AROUND ME!

THAT'S IT, TOUGH GUY!

NOW I'M COMING IN TO GET YOU!

YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK YOU COULD---

HEY! WHERE IS HE? WHERE'D HE GO?

OH NO! HE POUNDED AN ESCAPE ROUTE FOR HIMSELF--

--RIGHT DOWN THRU THE SIDE-WALK!

HE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR.

I HEAR HIM NOW-- RIGHT BELOW ME!

BUT, WHAT..?

HEY!

BK-OW!

MEBBE NOW YA'LL GIT THE MESSAGE!

BUT, IN CASE YA DON'T..

BEN, NO!

AJAX TRANSPORT

SOME-ONE'S IN THERE!

HE'LL BE KILLED!

JUMP, FELLA-- JUMP!

I'LL CATCH YOU!

MY TRUCK! LOOK WHAT HE DID TO MY TRUCK!

WHAT AM I GONNA TELL THE BOSS?

YOU GUYS OUGHTTA BE PUT AWAY... RISKIN' PEOPLE'S LIVES LIKE THAT!

PUBLIC MENACES --THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE!

SUPERHEROES -- BAH!

YOU SHOULD ALL BE RUN OUT OF TOWN!

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF COSTUMED MANIACS!

GRAB HIM! HOLD HIM FOR THE POLICE!

12

WHILE THEY'RE BLAMING ME--

NUTS!

THE THING ESCAPED!

AND, AS THE CITY'S MOOD GROWS ANGRIER-- IN THE OFFICES OF THE DAILY BUGLE ---

DID YOU SEE WHAT THOSE TWO ARE DOING TO THIS TOWN?

THEY'RE TURNING OUR STREETS INTO A BATTLE-FIELD!

THIS WASN'T EXACTLY THE GARDEN OF EDEN BEFORE THEM, J.J.

WHEN I WANT YOUR PHILOS-OPHY, MISTER -- I'LL ASK FOR IT!

MR. JAMESON -- GOT A MINUTE?

MEANWHILE, WRITE ME AN EDITORIAL-- FAST!

IT'S TIME WE TORE INTO THOSE DUMB LAW-BREAKING FREAKS!

13.

I'VE-- GOT SOME PHOTOS FOR YOU.

SHADDUP, PARKER! CAN'T YOU SEE WE'RE BUSY?

WHAT'S WITH YOU, ROBBIE? YOU MY CITY EDITOR OR NOT?

I WANT THAT EDITORIAL!

I CAN'T WRITE IT IF I DON'T FEEL IT, J.J.!

THE F.F. HAVE DONE A LOT FOR THIS TOWN!

YEAH, THEY'VE DONE A LOT, ALL RIGHT!

AND IF WE DON'T STOP 'EM, THEY'LL BURN IT TO THE GROUND!

THEY'RE ALMOST AS BAD AS THAT WALL-CRAWLING WORM, SPIDER-MAN!

GIMME THAT PORTABLE!

I'LL WRITE THE COLUMN MYSELF!

AND THAT'S JUST THE START OF IT---

FOR, INSIDE THE BAXTER BUILDING---

RICHARDS! I WANT TO SEE YOU.

THIS TIME I MEAN BUSI-NESS!

THE F.F. HAS TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO MOVE OUT!

PAY ATTENTION! I'M BREAKING YOUR LEASE!

RICHARDS-- I MEAN IT!

LOOK AT THE CROWDS DOWN THERE-- DEMONSTRATING -- BECAUSE OF YOU.

WELL, IT'S A FREE COUNTRY.

NOT WHEN OUR OTHER TENANTS START COM-PLAINING!

YOU'RE LOWER-ING THE PROPERTY VALUES IN THIS AREA!

SAVE OUR CITY

F.F. GO

FANTA- FOUR!

F.O. ME!

BUT WE'VE A JOB TO DO.

WE NEED A A HEAD-QUARTERS--- AND THIS IS IT!

YOU'VE HAD IT, RICHARDS! I'M TELLING YOU TO START PACKING!

WE D

NO MORE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

THE FANTASTIC FOUR NO MORE!

F.F. GO HOME

GAINST THE

YOU'VE BEEN *TROUBLE* EVER SINCE YOU MOVED *IN!* I NEVER SHOULD HAVE *RENTED* TO YOU!

LOOK-- I'VE A *PROBLEM* TO WORK ON! THERE ISN'T TIME TO *TALK!*

YOU *SAID* IT, FRIEND!

THERE SURE *ISN'T* TIME TO TALK!

YOU START *PACK-ING,* MISTER -- OR I'LL GET THE *LAW* TO HAVE YOU *EVICTED!*

YOU SANCTIMONIOUS *PHONY!* WHEN YOU FIRST *BUILT* THIS PLACE, YOU *BEGGED* US TO MOVE IN---

YOU WANTED THE *PUBLICITY* YOU'D GET FROM HAVING THE *FF* AS TENANTS!

YOU EVEN RAISED YOUR *RENTS* BECAUSE OF US!

BUT *NOW,* YOU'LL USE *ANY* EXCUSE TO GET US *OUT* OF HERE---

-- SO YOU CAN CHARGE YOUR *NEXT* TENANT *TWICE* AS MUCH!

WHA-- WHAT ARE YOU *DOING? STOP!* DON'T *HURT* ME!

HURT YOU? *HOW?* THE ONLY FEELING YOU'VE *GOT* IS IN YOUR *WALLET!*

WHEN I THINK OF THE TIMES WE'VE RISKED OUR *LIVES*--

FOR HUMAN *PARASITES* -- LIKE *YOU!*

HE'S *GONE!* BUT NOW, I'VE GOT TO CALM DOWN--

HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO *DO*-- ABOUT THE *THING!*

AND, SPEAKING OF THE ORANGE-SKINNED POWERHOUSE---

I'M *DONE* KIDDIN' AROUND!

NO MORE PENNY-ANTE STUFF FER *ME!*

ST MUNI

NK AND

IPA

SKRAK

BANK

FROM NOW ON, THE *THING'S* GONNA BE *BIG-TIME!* AND NO ONE CAN-- *HEY!*

THAT'S *MY* BUSINESS, BLUE-EYES!

HOW IN BLAZES DIDJA *FIND* ME AGAIN?

JUST LIKE I'M MAKING IT MY BUSINESS TO **STOP** YOU!

YEAH? YOU'N WHAT **OTHER** ARMY?

DON'T **TRY** ANY-THING, BEN.

YA **WANT** ME, JUNIOR?

THEN DRAG YER-SELF AROUND THE CORNER 'N **GIT** ME--IF YA **CAN!**

DID YOU THINK I'D BE AFRAID TO **FOLLOW** YOU?

DON'T **KID** YERSELF--

I WUZ **HOPIN'** YA'D BE **DUMB** ENUFF TO DO IT!

SKRUNCH!

BUT I SHOULD'A **KNOWED** YA **WOULD** BE!

WHAT'S **WITH** YOU? AM I SUPPOSED TO BE **IMPRESSED** 'CAUSE YOU'RE BENDING AN IRON **DOOR?**

I'VE SEEN YOUR STUNTS **BEFORE.**

YEAH? WELL, YA AIN'T NEVER SEEN **THIS** ONE, SMART GUY!

NOTHIN' LIKE AN **IRON FUNNEL** TA DOUSE YER CRUMMY **FLAME!**

THOOSH!

"EEEEEEEEE

SIRENS! MUST BE THE **FUZZ!**

NUTS! JUST WHEN I ALMOST **HAD** 'IM!

I BETTER **TAKE OFF** NOW.

SECONDS LATER---

WE'RE JUST IN **TIME!** HE HAD SOMEONE **TRAPPED** IN HERE!

CAREFUL! THE METAL'S STILL **SMOLDERING!**

KEEP **PUSHING!** WE'RE **GETTING** IT.

IT'S THE TORCH! IS HE OKAY?
NEVER MIND ABOUT ME! I'VE GOTTA FIND THE THING.
NOT THIS TIME, KID! THAT'S OUR JOB.
TAKE 'IM IN! HE'S GOT SOME QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.
SURE, SURE-- WHATEVER YOU SAY.
--AFTER I FIND BEN GRIMM!
FLAME ON!
MEANWHILE, MANY MILES AWAY---
--AND, IN NEW YORK, THE MAYOR IS URGING PEOPLE TO STAY OFF THE STREETS, UNTIL--
IT'S BEN! HE MUST BE STILL AT LARGE!
PERHAPS I SHOULD RETURN--
I SUGGEST YOU REMAIN HERE, MY DEAR! THE NEWS REPORT HAS DISTURBED THE BABY.
BUT YOUR PRESENCE WILL COMFORT LITTLE FRANKLIN.
HE COULDN'T HAVE HEARD THE TV, MRS. HARKNESS---
HE'S TWO ROOMS AWAY... WITH THE DOOR SHUT!
I DIDN'T SAY HE HEARD IT, DEAR.
PERHAPS I'D BETTER CHECK ON--OH!
I CAN HEAR HIM CRYING IN HIS ROOM.
YOU WERE RIGHT!
HE KEPT MUMBLING DA DA -- AS THOUGH HE'S WORRIED ABOUT HIS FATHER!
BUT, HOW COULD HE POSSIBLY--?
PERHAPS HE WAS HAVING A CHILDISH DREAM.
AT ANY RATE, I WILL STAY A LITTLE LONGER.
IT'S BEEN SO WONDERFUL-- SPENDING ALL THIS TIME WITH HIM.
IF ONLY --I WASN'T SO WORRIED --ABOUT THE OTHERS.

AND, EVEN AS THE LOVELY *SUE RICHARDS* FONDLES HER SLEEPING CHILD---

THE *TORCH* WOULDN'T NEVER FIGGER I'D COME *BACK* TO THE SAME PLACE *TWICE*.

BUT ONCE I GIT *STARTED*, I AIN'T THE TYPE WHAT GIVES *UP*!

MUNICIPAL BANK AND TRUST

--SPECIALLY WHEN THIS IS LIKE OPENIN' A CAN O' *SARDINES* TO ME!

ALL RIGHT, THING! WE KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE!

SHEEESH! I FERGOT ABOUT THE *COPS*!

THE BANK'S *SURROUNDED*! TURN AROUND AND COME OUT --*SLOWLY*.

HE *HEARD* YOU! HE'S *COMING*.

I'LL WAIT'LL I GIT *OUTSIDE* THE WINDOW--

AND THEN I'LL *RUN* FER IT!

BY THE TIME THEY GIT THE *RANGE*--

IT'LL BE TOO LATE!

STOP HIM! HE'S SMASHING OUR CARS!

STOP 'IM? HOW?

HE FIXED IT SO WE COULDN'T DRIVE AFTER HIM!

AND THIS BAZOOKA CAN'T NAIL 'IM---

THE STREETS ARE TOO CROWDED!

THERE'S WHAT I NEED!

NOW-- WHILE HE'S SLOWIN' FER A TURN--

YEOWLP!

SOMETHING --GRABBED THE CAR!

BEAT IT, BUSTER! WALKIN'S BETTER FOR YER HEALTH!

THERE AIN'T ROOM FER MY HEAD--

SO I'LL MAKE ROOM!

WELL, IT AIN'T NO FERRARI--

BUT IT BEATS HOOFIN' IT!

MEANWHILE---

REED'S SIGNAL! SOMETHING'S UP!

MAYBE HE FOUND BEN.

JOHNNY! I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING-- FOR BEN---

--BUT I NEED HELP-- IN THE LAB.

WHY TELL ME? I'M NO TEST-TUBE JOCKEY.

BUT YOU CAN FIND SOMEONE WHO IS!

NOW HURRY -- DO AS I TOLD YOU.
EVERY SECOND COUNTS!
OKAY, OKAY! I READ YOU.
IF BANNER'S ANYWHERE IN THE CITY.. HE WON'T MISS THIS.
BRUCE BANNER CONTACT F.F. URGENT!
AND, BEFORE THE TORCH CAN EVEN LAND...
IT-- MEANS TROUBLE! BUT I CAN'T REFUSE
I JUST-- MUSTN'T LET MYSELF BECOME-- EXCITED!
THE BAXTER BUILDING.. AND DRIVE CAREFULLY.
IT'S-- IMPORTANT THAT I REMAIN --- CALM.
IN A NEW YORK HACK? -- FERGIT IT, PAL!
BUT THEN, AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT---
HEY! LOOK AT THAT, MISTER!
IT'S THE THING.. BATTLING THE POLICE!
JUST WHAT I SHOULDN'T HAVE SEEN!
TAXI
HUH? WADDAYA MEAN YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE--
HEY!!
IN THE PARK.. MY OLD ENEMY!
THIS TIME-- THING WON'T ESCAPE FROM ME!
THIS TIME.. THING MUST DIE!
THE HULK!
NEXT
BATTLE OF THE BEHEMOTHS!

FANTASTIC FOUR

15¢ CC

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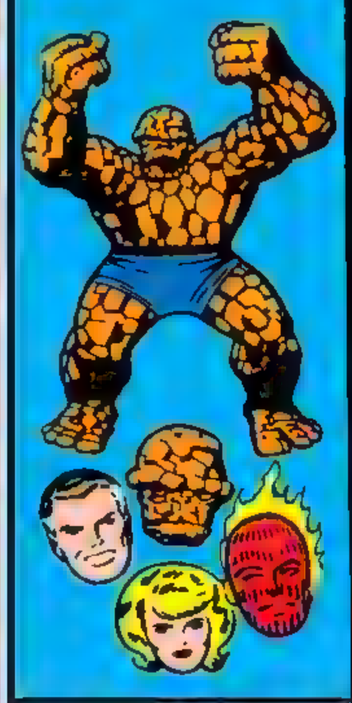

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Fantastic Four™

HULK vs. THING

--'NUFF SAID!

THE FABULOUS F.F. MUST FINALLY FACE--THEIR GREATEST LOSS!

BATTLE OF THE BEHEMOTHS!

AS THE RAMPAGING *THING* BATTLES THE POLICE IN CENTRAL PARK, THE HATE-MADDENED *HULK* ATTACKS HIM! AND THAT'S *ALL* WE NEED TO KNOW!

THIS TIME-- THING MUST *DIE!*

SPOW!

THE HULK!

THE CLASH OF TITANS! YOURS-- RIGHT NOW!

FANG!

SCRIPTED WITH GENIUS, BY: STAN LEE

PENCILLED WITH GLORY, BY: JOHN BUSCEMA

EMBELLISHED WITH GRANDEUR BY: JOE SINNOTT

LETTERED WITH A SCRATCHY PEN, BY: SAM ROSEN

'NUFF MARVEL MAKES IT AGAIN! SAID

608Z

BKOOO

THAT'LL BE THE DAY

ANY TIME I CAN'T HANDLE A STIFF LIKE *YOU*...

LAST TIME WE TANGLED I WENT *EASY* ON YA--*

'CAUSE I DIDN'T *KNOW* NO BETTER

BUT *THIS* TIME IT'S GONNA BE *DIFF'RENT*

*HANDS *UP*, THOSE OF YOU WHO REMEMBER 'WAY BACK TO ISH #24 AND #25 -- STAN.

HOLD YOUR FIRE! DON'T WASTE YOUR AMMO

IF WE'RE *LUCKY*, THEY'LL FINISH EACH OTHER *OFF*

WE NEED *BIGGER* STUFF THAN *THIS* AGAINST *THOSE* TWO, ANYWAY

C'MON! C'MON! STAY *BACK!* AND THAT GOES FOR YOU *PRESS-PASS COWBOYS*, TOO.

THIS AIN'T NO *LOVE*-IN! WITH THE *THING* 'N THE *HULK* SQUARIN' OFF, *ANYTHING* CAN HAPPEN

POLICE LINE- DO NOT CROSS

THEY BETTER HURRY WITH THOSE *HOWITZERS*, SARGE

STILL LOOKIN' FER *TROUBLE*, HUH?

AWRIGHT, MUSCLE-BOUND -- YA CAME TO THE RIGHT *PLACE*

ZZAKK!

GENERAL FOREBUSH

IT'S ABOUT *TIME* SOMEONE GAVE YA YER OWN *STATUE*

THIS HUNK'A *STONE* 'LL JUST MATCH YER *HEAD*

2.

YOU THINK YOU CAN STOP HULK WITH *THAT?*

IF *THAT* DON'T DO IT-- THERE'S PLENTY *MORE* WHERE IT CAME FROM

NOTHING CAN STOP *HULK*

THOK

HULK CAN SQUEEZE HARDEST *STONE*-- INTO *DUST*

JUST LIKE HULK WILL SQUEEZE-- THE *THING*

AT THAT MOMENT, BACK AT THE *BAXTER BUILDING*--

REED! *REED!* THE WHOLE *WORLD'S* GOING CRAZY

BEN AND THE *HULK* ARE TRYING TO *KILL* EACH OTHER

I DON'T *GET* IT! WHERE'D THE HULK *COME* FROM?

IT'S *MY* FAULT, JOHNNY

WHEN I CONTACTED *BRUCE BANNER,* TO HELP ME IN THE *LAB*---

I DIDN'T KNOW HE'D TURN INTO THE *HULK*--- BECAUSE OF THE *SHOCK* OF SEEING *BEN* AGAIN

WE'VE GOTTA *GO* THERE-- AND *HELP*

I *CAN'T,* JOHNNY! I CAN'T LEAVE MY *WORK*

WHAT GOOD'LL YOUR *WORK* BE-- IF THE *FF* BREAKS UP?

THE WHOLE *CITY'S* TURNING AGAINST US! *LOOK*---

THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* MUST BE *STOPPED*-- BEFORE IT'S TOO *LATE*

NOBODY CAN TAKE THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS-- NOBODY!

THE FF MUST BE SMASHED! THE HULK MUST BE SMASHED! EVERYONE WITH SUPER-POWERS MUST BE SMASHED!

OUR CITY CAN'T BE A BATTLE-GROUND FOR COSTUMED KILLERS

PUT AN END TO VIOLENCE

SMASH THEM!

CRUSH THEM!

KILL THEM!

HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND! WE'RE TRYING TO PROTECT THE CITY! IF THEY STOP US NOW---

REED! WHAT HAPPENED? THE LIGHTS WENT OUT

THE POWERS GONE OFF IN THE LAB

NO! NO! NOT NOW! NOT NOW!

WITHOUT THAT POWER, I CAN'T FINISH MY WORK! I CAN'T SAVE BEN!

HELLO! HELLO! THIS IS RICHARDS! LISTEN TO ME--

YOU LISTEN, MISTER! YOU HAD YOUR WARNING

I TOLD YOU I'D FIND A WAY TO GET YOU OUT OF MY BUILDING

THE FOOL! THE BLIND, ABYSMAL FOOL ---

LOOK-- YOU STAY THERE AND CRY IN YOUR SOUP! I'M GOIN' OUT TO DO SOMETHING

IF THERE'S A WAY TO END THAT FIGHT-- TO BRING BEN TO HIS SENSES-- I'LL FIND IT

FLAME ON!

NO, JOHNNY-- NO! COME BACK! I NEED YOU

NOT THIS TIME, REED! BEN NEEDS ME-- EVEN MORE

MAYBE, AT YOUR AGE, IT'S OKAY TO WAIT---

BUT SITTING ON THE SIDELINES JUST ISN'T THE TORCH'S BAG!

I SAID *WAIT*--- AND I *MEANT* IT

SHOOSH!

I'M STILL THE *LEADER* HERE-- NO MATTER *WHAT*

CHEMICAL FOAM! -- PUTTING OUT MY *FLAME*

BUT-- FROM THIS HEIGHT-- I'LL *FALL*

IS HE-- TRYING TO *KILL* ME?

ANYONE CAN PLUNGE BLINDLY INTO *ACTION*

NO ONE CAN ACCUSE *ME* OF BEING AN ARMCHAIR GENERAL

BUT, IT CAN TAKE *MORE* COURAGE TO *WAIT*-- TILL THE RIGHT *TIME*

LOOK *DOWN* --- INTO THE *STREET!* I SAID *LOOK*

THE ENTIRE *CITY'S* ON THE VERGE OF *PANIC*

ANGRY *CROWDS* ARE STORMING THE *BAXTER BUILDING*

THIS IS WHERE WE'LL *WIN*-- OR *LOSE!* AND TO *WIN*-- I NEED YOU *BESIDE* ME

BAXTER BU

IF BEN CAN BE *SAVED*--- IT MUST BE *HERE*

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR *MIND!* WHAT CAN WE DO *HERE?*

WE CAN FIND A WAY TO MAKE BEN *NORMAL*-- TO CLEAR HIS *BRAIN*, SO WE CAN *REASON* WITH HIM AGAIN

THAT'S HOW TO SAVE THOSE CROWDS DOWN THERE! IT'S THE *ONLY* WAY

NOW-- *IGNITE* YOUR HAND AND GRAB CIRCUIT G--

YOU'VE GOT TO SUPPLY THE *POWER* THAT'S BEEN SHUT OFF

EVEN *WITHOUT* BANNER'S HELP, I'LL *FIND* A WAY TO CONTROL THE *THING!* I MUST! *I MUST*

OKAY! BUT-- IT BETTER *WORK*

MEANWHILE, THE BLUDGEONING BATTLE CONTINUES---

THAT'S *IT,* CHARLIE-- *COME* TA POPPA--

HULK IS *BIGGER!* HULK IS *STRONGER*

MEBBE *SO---*

BUT *I'M* A HECKUVA LOT *FASTER*

BK

--AND I AIN'T EXACTLY NO *FLYWEIGHT* MYSELF

HULK CAN BE HIT A *HUNDRED* TIMES---

BUT HULK CAN'T BE *HURT*

THAT'S WHY--- HULK ALWAYS *WINS*

YER *DUMBER* THAN YA *LOOK*

IF YOU CALL THAT *WINNIN'*..

VRAK!

HEY! YA CAN GIT YERSELF A *SPLINTER* DOIN' THAT

AWRIGHT, JUNIOR --- I'M *THRU* KIDDIN' AROUND

SO CHEW ON *THIS* FER A WHILE

SKRRAEKK!

WATCH IT! YER BUSTIN' UP MY *TREE*

AIN'TCHA GOT NO RESPECT FOR *NATURE?*

ZROK!

WHAT'S KEEPIN' YA *UP?* THAT SOCK WOULD'A FLATTENED A *ARMY*

THE *LONGER* I FIGHT -- THE *STRONGER* I GET

THING'S *SPEED* CAN'T HELP HIM *NOW*

NOT WHEN *HULK* CAN TEAR THE *GROUND* OUT--- FROM *UNDER* HIM

SKRUTCH!!

NOW-- HULK HAS *CAUGHT* YOU--LIKE *RAT* IN A TRAP---

AND, BEFORE THING CAN CLIMB *OUT*---

IT WILL BE --TOO *LATE*

OKAY, BIG-MOUTH-- SO YA *HAD* YER FUN

NOW IT'S *MY* TURN

HOLD *TIGHT*, BUZZARD-BRAIN--

--'CAUSE I WOULDN'T WANTCHA TO *FALL*

HUMM!

I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WOULD **NEVER** GET HERE

C'MON! MOVE IT **UP!** WE **NEED** THAT HEAVY ARTILLERY

BIG **CANNONS**-- TO SHOOT AT **HULK**

BUT HULK LEARNED **LESSON**--MANY TIMES IN **PAST**

SUDDENLY, THE MOST **POWERFUL** LEGS ON EARTH GROW **TENSE**...

HULK WILL GO WHERE GUNS CAN'T **SHOOT**

HE'S **JUMPING**--CLEAN OUTTA THE **PARK**

HE'S HEADIN' FOR THE **BUILDINGS** -- SO WE CAN'T **FIRE**

HULK WILL BE **SAFE**-- HERE ON ROOF

SOONER OR LATER, **THING** WILL FOLLOW

NUTS! NOW THAT THEY CAN'T SHOOT AT **HIM**--

THEY'RE BLASTIN' AT **ME**

HRUH-BOOM

I ALWAYS **DID** GO FOR **MERRY-GO-ROUNDS**

BUT I SEE A WAY TA **STOP** 'EM

NOW, **THIS** ONE CAN GO FOR **ME!** --SPECIALLY SINCE NO ONE'S **USIN'** IT

GIDDIYAP, YA BLASTED NAGS

I'LL GIVE YA A RIDE YA'LL NEVER FERGET

SPUN AT A SPEED THAT DEFIES MERE DESCRIPTION, THE CAREENING CALLIOPE IS HURTLED FROM ITS BASE ---

THIS IS ALMOST AS MUCH FUN AS SKIMMIN' A PAPER PLATE..

RUN! RUN!

HURRY! IT'S COMING RIGHT TOWARDS US

THE CANNONS! HE WAS AIMING AT THE CANNONS

AND WHAT I AIM AT-- I HIT

FZ-K-K!

THE HULK'S SOMEWHERE ON THEM ROOFTOPS --- THINKIN' I CAN'T GO AFTER 'IM

WELL, NOBODY TEARS INTA THE THING LIKE THAT 'N GITS AWAY WITH IT

I GOTTA FINISH 'IM OFF-- SO I DON'T HAVETA WORRY ABOUT 'IM NO MORE

AND I KNOW JUST THE WAY TA DO IT

OKAY-- SO MEBBE I CAN'T **JUMP** AS HIGH AS THAT GREEN-SKINNED **GOON**---

BUT THAT AIN'T GONNA STOP **ME**

THWANNNG!

HAH! HULK **KNEW** THING WOULD **FOLLOW**

IT'S **UNCANNY**-- **INDESCRIBABLE!** IT'S AS THOUGH THEY'VE **FORGOTTEN** THE REST OF THE WORLD **EXISTS**

THEY'VE ONLY **ONE** PURPOSE-- **ONE** OBJECTIVE --TO **DESTROY** EACH OTHER

NO ONE CAN **STOP** THEM! NO ONE EVEN DARES **INTERFERE**

AND AS THE BLUDGEONING BATTLE IS TELEVISED TO A BREATHLESSLY WATCHING WORLD---

I DON'T **UNDER-STAND** IT, MRS. HARKNESS! I JUST **DON'T**

WHERE ARE **REED**-- AND **JOHNNY?**

WHY DON'T THEY TRY TO **STOP** THEM?

UNLESS-- UNLESS THEY **DID** TRY, AND-- SOME-THING **HAPPENED** TO THEM

DON'T TORTURE YOURSELF WITH **DOUBTS,** MY DEAR

NOT WHEN WE CAN EASILY **LEARN** THE ANSWER

LEARN THE **ANSWER?** BUT **HOW?** WHAT DO YOU **MEAN?**

STEP INTO MY **RITUAL ROOM**-- AND I'LL **SHOW** YOU

LIVING HERE ALONE ALL THESE YEARS, ON WHISPER HILL---

--HAS TAUGHT ME MANY THINGS

AMONG THEM, IS THIS---

WATCH THE MYSTIC CRYSTAL, SUSAN STORM ---WATCH! WATCH

REED! I SEE HIS FACE-- TAKING FORM

HE'S IN HIS LAB--- WORKING DESPERATELY--- FRANTICALLY--

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED

HE'S TRYING TO HELP-- IN HIS OWN WAY

12

AND THAT'S WHAT I SHOULD BE DOING

YES! IT IS TIME YOU RETURNED TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR

GOODBYE, FRANKLIN! GOODBYE, MY LITTLE DARLING

MOMMY WILL COME BACK-- AS SOON AS SHE CAN

IT'LL TAKE AT LEAST A HALF-HOUR TO REACH THE CITY

I HOPE-- AND PRAY-- THAT I WON'T BE TOO LATE

13

AT THAT MOMENT, *ANOTHER* HEARTSICK FEMALE MAKES A FATEFUL DECISION ---

NO ONE CAN *STOP* THEM! NO ONE EVEN DARES *INTERFERE*

I CAN'T *WAIT* HERE ANY LONGER

CLICK!

THE HULK IS *BIGGER-- STRONG-ER* THAN BEN

IF SOMEONE DOESN'T *STOP* THEM---

DESPERATELY, THE BLIND BEAUTY RUSHES INTO THE DANGER-FRAUGHT *STREET*---

I'VE GOT TO *FIND* HIM-- SOMEWHERE-- SOMEHOW--

LADY--- LOOK *OUT!* THE *CARS!* YOU'LL BE-- *OHHHH*

BEN! WHERE *ARE* YOU, MY DARLING

WATCH IT, SISTER! YOU SOME KINDA *NUT,* OR SOMETHIN'?

HONK!

HONK!

HONK!

HONK!

WITHOUT A SINGLE THOUGHT FOR HER OWN *SAFETY,* ALICIA MASTERS DASHES FORWARD --- IN THE DIRECTION EVERYONE ELSE IS *FLEEING* FROM---

I'M GETTING *CLOSER!* I CAN *FEEL* IT

CLEAR THE STREETS! EVERYBODY BACK! BACK!

WHILE ON THE *ROOFTOPS* AHEAD---

THAT'S *IT,* GRUESOME! STEP RIGHT *UP*

I GOT A LITTLE *PRESENT* WAITIN' FOR YA-- AND YOU KNOW *WHY*--?

--'CAUSE IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

STRIKING WITH THE FORCE OF A HUNDRED *PILE DRIVERS,* THE THING *SHATTERS* THE NEARBY CHIMNEY---

--- HURLING AN *AVALANCHE* OF CAREENING *BRICKS* AT THE ONRUSHING *HULK*---

WITH SHATTERING FORCE--THEY *STOP* HIM FOR A SECOND ---

KRAK

-- BUT *ONLY* FOR A SECOND

NOTHING CAN STOP *HULK*

NOTHING!

BUT, A FALL LIKE *THIS* CAN STOP THE *THING*

SO I AIN'T GONNA FALL NO *FURTHER*

THAT'S FER SURE

HAPPY LANDIN'S, CHARLIE

NUTS! I FERGOT! HE'S *ALWAYS* JUMPIN' OVER BUILDIN'S 'N STUFF---

THE MOST HE'LL GIT IS A KING-SIZE *CHARLEY HORSE*

BUT NOT IF *I* CAN HELP IT

I GOTTA GIT *DOWN* THERE-- BEFORE HE KNOWS WHAT *HIT* 'IM

-- 'N I AIN'T ABOUT TO *WAIT* FER NO CRUMMY *ELEVATOR*

SKRR RUNTCH!

NOBODY PUSHES THE BLUE-EYED *THING* AROUND

-- 'N GITS *AWAY* WITH IT

MEANWHILE, *PANIC* MOUNTS IN THE STREET BELOW ---

IT'S THE *HULK!* RUN! *RUN!*

THE *THING!* WHERE IS-- THE *THING?*

HE WON'T ESCAPE *HULK*

HULK WILL *FIND* HIM! HULK WILL *CRUSH* HIM

DON'T GIT YER JAWS IN AN *UPROAR,* DUM DUM

YA *WANT* ME? YA *GOT* ME

HAH! *THIS* TIME HULK MOVED TOO *FAST* FOR YOU

SO YA GRABBED MY *PAW!* BIG DEAL

YA STILL GOT THE *REST* OF ME TA WORRY ABOUT

NO! NO! THING IS HELPLESS NOW

ONCE HULK GETS YOU IN HIS GRIP...

NOBODY CAN EVER BREAK FREE

HE-- HE AIN'T-- KIDDIN'

HIS ARMS-- LIKE A COUPLE'A VISES

I-- GOTTA BREAK FREE-- BEFORE IT'S-- TOO LATE

HIS LEG! IF I CAN REACH DOWN-- 'N GRAB IT---

I-- I GOT IT

KHWUMMP!

IT WORKED

DEPT. OF SANITATION

BUT-- I GOTTA GIT-- MY BREATH

--NEED A MINNIT TO-- CLEAR MY HEAD

HE'S-- COMIN' AGAIN

I CAN HEAR 'IM

THING IS TIRED--- GETTING WEAK! HULK NEVER GETS WEAK

THAT'S WHY HULK ALWAYS WINS

FERGET IT, FREAK-O! YER ALL WET!

JUST LIKE YER GONNA BE ---

-- SOON AS I SQUEEZE THIS TANK THE WAY I WANNA

SH-BOSH!

SEE WHAT I MEAN?

OKAY, CRUMB-BUM I'M READY FOR YA NOW

HULK IS READY, TOO

THEN WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR?

HULK IS THRU WAITING

THING KEEPS FORGETTING--

THE MORE HULK FIGHTS -- THE STRONGER HULK GETS

RELAX! YA AIN'T GONNA BE FIGHTIN' THAT MUCH LONGER

--NOT IF I CAN HELP IT

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE DAZED AND DISTRAUGHT ALICIA MASTERS WANDERS ONTO THE SCENE ---

AROUND THE CORNER-- THAT HORRIBLE, THUMPING NOISE---

IT CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING--

I'VE FOUND THEM

BUT, WHAT DO I DO? HOW DO I GET BEN TO LISTEN?

IF I CAN JUST GET CLOSER! I-- HAVE TO MAKE HIM SEE ME

BUT, WHAT OF *REED* -- AND THE *HUMAN TORCH?* WE'RE GLAD YOU ASKED ---

THAT'S *IT*, JOHNNY! THAT'S *IT*

KEEP *ENERGIZING* THE DYNAMOS

SSSSSSSSSS

ANOTHER FEW *SECONDS* AND WE'LL BE *DONE*

BUT WHAT IF IT DOESN'T *WORK?*

DON'T *SAY* THAT, BOY! DON'T EVEN *THINK* IT

I'VE *GOTTA* SAY IT

WE WASTED PRECIOUS *MINUTES* HERE -- WHEN WE COULD'A BEEN HELPING *BEN*

AND *NOW* -- IF THAT GOOFY *GIZMO* OF YOURS SHOULD *FIZZLE OUT* ---

THEN, AT LEAST WE *TRIED! NO* ONE CAN DO *MORE*

SAVING BEN WOULDN'T BE *ENOUGH!* HE'S TURNED *BAD* -- HE'S A *MENACE!* WE'VE GOT TO *CURE* HIM AT THE SAME TIME

NOW *GET BACK TO WORK*

AND THEN, FINALLY ---

NOW CHEW ON *THIS* FER A WHILE

BEN! *BEN!* IT'S *ME!* IT'S -- *ALICIA*

THAT *CRASH!* HIS BLOW MUST HAVE SHATTERED THE ENTIRE *SIDEWALK*

OH! BEN ---

THAK!

-- BEN --

HUH? *ALICIA'S* VOICE

KO

POW!

THAT'S IT! LET'S GO

WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT THRU THE CROWDS BELOW

I'VE A BETTER IDEA

AND SO---

HANG ON, MISTER

THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

THAT MUST BE THE SPOT--- BELOW

THE WHOLE AREA'S A SHAMBLES

THERE'S ALICIA, AND-- AND BEN

WHAT IS IT? WHAT HAPPENED?

HE TURNED HIS HEAD-- AT THE WRONG SECOND

AND THE HULK FINISHED HIM

THE BATTLE OVER, THE LUMBERING GREEN GIANT SLOWLY CHANGES --- UNTIL THE DAZED FIGURE OF BRUCE BANNER FADES INTO THE YAWNING NIGHT---

BUT, FOR SOME, THERE CAN BE NO FADING AWAY-- THERE CAN BE NO FORGETTING --

IT'S YOUR FAULT-- YOU, AND YOUR CRUMMY MACHINE

YOU KILLED HIM--BY BEING TOO LATE! YOU KILLED BEN!

NEXT---

THE AWFUL

AFTERMATH!

FANTASTIC FOUR

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Fantastic Four

THE COMING OF THE OVER-MIND!

THIS ONE HAS IT ALL!

THE FATE OF THE THING!

MISTER FANTASTIC FIGHTS BACK!

THE WATCHER SPEAKS!

THE TORCH IN ACTION!

..AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

BEFORE THE F.F. CAN CATCH THEIR BREATH, THEY WILL HAVE TO FACE--

THE POWER OF.. THE OVER-MIND!

LAST ISH, WE SAW **THE THING**, LOCKED IN MORTAL COMBAT WITH THE RAMPAGING **HULK!** AND THEN, DUE TO A STARTLING ACCIDENT OF FATE--

HE'S **DEAD!** THE HULK **KILLED** HIM

AND IT'S **YOUR FAULT**-- 'CAUSE YOU **WAITED** TOO LONG

BEN--**DEAD?** OH NO--**NO!** IT CAN'T BE **TRUE!** NOT-- NOT **BEN**

THERE'S NO **PULSE!** NO **HEART-BEAT**

STORY:
STAN (THE MAN) LEE

PENCILLING:
BIG JOHN BUSCEMA
EMBELLISHMENT:
JOLTIN' JOE SINNOTT
LETTERING:
ADORABLE ARTIE SIMEK

6447

I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD'A GOTTEN HERE SOONER! BUT YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN

NO, NOT YOU! YOU HADDA STAY WITH YOUR TEST TUBES WHILE POOR BEN BATTLED ALONE

AND NOW-- IT'S OVER! THE HULK KILLED HIM

EVEN AS THE TORTURED YOUTH CONTINUES HIS TIRADE, A DAZED, WEARY FIGURE, ALL BUT UNNOTICED BY THE GROWING CROWD, SILENTLY SLIPS AWAY--

I'VE TURNED BACK TO BRUCE BANNER AGAIN

IF ONLY IT HAD HAPPENED SOONER

I NEVER MEANT FOR THIS TO HAPPEN

THE HULK DIDN'T WANT BEN GRIMM TO DIE

"WE WERE JUST SQUARING OFF--HE WAS READY FOR MY ATTACK--"

"BUT THEN, UNEXPECTEDLY --HE HEARD THE VOICE OF THE GIRL HE LOVED--"

BEN!

"HE TURNED--AND BEFORE I COULD STOP MY BLOW-- IT WAS ALL OVER FOR HIM"

"WITH THE THING DEFEATED, MY RAGE DIED DOWN! THE UNCONTROLLABLE FURY I HAD FELT SEEMED TO FADE AWAY"

HE'S SO STILL! I--I CAN FEEL NO HEARTBEAT

AND NOW, I'M MY NORMAL SELF AGAIN

BUT, WHY COULDN'T I HAVE BEEN THE ONE--TO DIE?

WHILE, AROUND THE CORNER--

DO WE MOVE IN NOW, CAPTAIN?

RIGHT! OUR ORDERS ARE TO ARREST THE FANTASTIC FOUR

THERE'S ONLY THREE OF 'EM TO TACKLE!

THE THING'S HAD IT

STAND BACK THERE! LET US THRU

YOU AND THE KID ARE UNDER ARREST, RICHARDS

THEY'RE MURDERERS! THEY ALMOST WRECKED THE CITY

I'VE GOT MY ORDERS TO BRING YOU IN

YEAH! UP THE FF

YOU'RE ARRESTING US? FOR WHAT?

YOU KIDDIN'? LOOK AT THE DAMAGE YOU CAUSED

IT WAS POOR BEN-- FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE

DON'T GIVE US ANY TROUBLE, MISTER! YOU CAN TELL IT TO THE JUDGE

KEEP BEN'S NAME OUT OF THIS, REED

LISTEN, JOHNNY-- THEY MUSTN'T TAKE US! I--JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING

IT'S TOO LATE, BIG BRAIN! BEN'S FINISHED-- AND SO ARE YOU, IN MY BOOK

HEY-- WATCH IT! HE'S GETTIN' AWAY!

NO TIME TO EXPLAIN

YOU CAN'T HOLD ME NOW

HE'S STRETCHING --LIKE RUBBER

WHERE-- WHERE'D HE GO?

I HATE TO DO THIS--BUT I MUST

I'LL JUST WRAP YOU UP FOR A FEW SECONDS--

--AND THEN LET YOU GO-- WHEN I'M IN THE CLEAR

WHAT?!

--TO ROLL MYSELF INTO THE SHAPE OF A BALL

THAT GAVE ME THE TIME I NEED--

OH NO! REINFORCE-MENTS! THEY'VE ALL THE CORNERS BLOCKED

THAT'S IT! KEEP FIRING! DON'T GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO PLAN

HE'S BOUNCING AIM-LESSLY-- IN PANIC

WHY IS HE TRYING SO DESPERATELY TO ESCAPE?

KRAK!

JOHNNY! HELP ME! IT'S FOR BEN! YOU HAVE TO-- UNNHH!

WE GOT 'IM! HE SMASHED INTO THE WALL

HE'S STUNNED! HURRY-- GRAB HIM BEFORE HE CAN--

HEY! WHAT'S THIS? WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

CAN'T TOUCH HIM! THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE WAY

AT THAT MOMENT, ON A NEARBY ROOFTOP, A LONE FEMALE CONCENTRATES-- CONCENTRATES--

THANK HEAVEN I GOT HERE IN TIME

MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD WILL SHIELD HIM

IF ONLY I HAD LEFT MISS HARKNESS EARLIER

PERHAPS I COULD HAVE HELPED POOR BEN

I'VE GOT TO GET DOWN THERE! BUT FIRST--

I'LL RELEASE THE FIELD LONG ENOUGH FOR JOHNNY TO JOIN HIM--

THEY'RE TOGETHER-- CARRYING BEN

NOW THEY'LL NEED MY JET CAR

I MUST BE CRAZY, HELPIN' YOU LIKE THIS

SECONDS LATER, AFTER PAUSING TO PICK UP ALICIA--

TO THE LAB, SUE--AT ATTACK SPEED

BEN'S LIFE DEPENDS ON IT

BEN'S LIFE? BUT--BUT I THOUGHT--

DON'T THINK! JUST MOVE! MOVE!

DON'T TALK! JUST DO AS I SAY

I--WON'T FAIL YOU, DARLING

JOHNNY! THERE'S NO ROOM IN THE CABIN

FLAME ON! FLY AFTER US

P.D.

HURRY, KID! I'LL NEED YOU IN THE LAB

HE MUST HAVE FLIPPED! IF BEN'S DEAD, WHAT'S THE RUSH?

BUT, I MIGHT AS WELL SEE IT THRU

BRING HER IN FAST! EVERY SECOND COUNTS

HANG ON, REED

STAY IN THE SHIP! I'LL ACTIVATE THE AUTOMATIC LIFT

CLICK

THAT LIGHT IN THE SKY-- I NOTICED IT BEFORE

I WONDER WHAT IT IS?

NEVER MIND THAT! FLAME OFF

WHILE, IN THE STREET BELOW--

THE F.F. AMIST O!

NY--SI! F.F. NO!

MAK CITY SAF

UP THE F. F.

UP AL SUPER HE

THEY LANDED ON THE ROOF

GET 'EM! BREAK DOWN THE DOOR

BAX BUIL

AND THEN, AS THE MOB'S EMOTION REACHES FEVER PITCH--

LOOK! IN THE SKY! WHAT IS IT?

IT'S HEADING FOR THE FF's PENT-HOUSE

IT'S A TRICK! THEY'RE UP TO SOME-THING

MEANWHILE--

LEVEL WITH US, REED! WHY ALL THE RUSH?

BECAUSE I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING--ABOUT BEN

QUICK, OPEN THE LAB! I'LL EXPLAIN AS WE GO

WE WERE ALL SO SHOOK UP BEFORE, WE FORGOT ONE VITAL FACT--

BEN'S SKIN IS MUCH TOUGHER THAN NORMAL HUMAN FLESH

IT TAKES SPECIAL, ULTRA-SENSITIVE EQUIPMENT TO DETECT HIS HEARTBEAT

NOW BE QUIET-- EVERY-ONE

THEN, AS THE SLOW, TORTUROUS SECONDS DRAG BY--

DOES BEN REALLY HAVE A CHANCE? OR IS REED JUST--HEY!

THAT LIGHT! IT'S GETTING BIGGER! COMING CLOSER

LOOK! THERE'S THE TORCH

THAT LIGHT OF YOURS AINT SCARIN' US

COME DOWN-- BEFORE WE GO 'N GET YOU

SHUDDUP, BLAST YOU! REED NEEDS IT QUIET UP HERE

OKAY! THEN I'LL SHUT YOU UP

TOO LATE TO STOP ME NOW

JOHNNY-- NO!

BUT *RELAX!* A LITTLE *SMOKE ATTACK* NEVER HURT ANYONE

THEY'RE *DISPERSING!* NOW, JUST ONE *MORE* LITTLE PUFF--

STOP IT, YOU FOOL

THAT'S ALL YOU'RE *GOOD* FOR, ISN'T IT? JUST *STOPPIN'* PEOPLE

LIKE YOU STOPPED ME *BEFORE*--FROM SAVIN' POOR *BEN*

STOW IT! YOU'VE SAID *ENOUGH*

YOU BONE-HEADED *BRAT*--I'M TRYING TO *SAVE* HIM

THE *CURRENT'S* STILL OFF! REED NEEDS YOUR *HELP*-- TO ENERGIZE HIS *TRANSFORMER*

YOU CAN'T FAIL US *NOW,* JOHNNY

OKAY! *OKAY!* GET OFF MY *BACK,* SIS

AWRIGHT! HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO *MAKE* YOUR GRANDSTAND PLAY

IT'S NO *ACT,* JOHNNY! THIS IS FOR *REAL*

PLEASE, GOD! PLEASE! *PLEASE*--

I THOUGHT I DETECTED A *HEARTBEAT!* AND, IF I'M *RIGHT*--

THIS *ENERGY BOOSTER* WILL BE ALL THAT'S-- THAT'S--

FACE IT, BIG MOUTH--

YER *ALWAYS* RIGHT

BEN!

WHAT'S EVERYONE LOOKIN' SO *SURPRISED* ABOUT?

YA DIDN'T THINK THAT BIG GREEN *GORILLA* COULD POLISH OFF THE *THING?*

BEN! *BEN!* I--I CAN'T FIND THE *WORDS--*

YEAH? *THAT'LL* BE THE DAY

YOU--WERE *RIGHT,* REED! AND I WAS *WRONG* AGAIN-- AS USUAL

I LOST MY *TEMPER*-- BLEW MY COOL--GAVE *UP* ON YOU, AND ON *BEN*-- JUST LIKE A SPINELESS *QUITTER*

DON'T *SAY* IT, SON! YOU THOUGHT YOUR *BEST FRIEND* WAS DEAD-- THOUGHT THAT *I* HAD FAILED HIM

YOU WOULDN'T BE *HUMAN* IF YOU HADN'T!

AND YOU WOULDN'T BE THE *TORCH* IF YOU HADN'T *APOLOGIZED*-- LIKE THE *MAN* YOU ARE

STRETCHO'S *RIGHT,* KID

BUT YA *STILL* SHOULD'A GAVE 'IM A *HOT-FOOT*-- FER ME

THWOMP!

NOT ONLY ARE YOU *ALIVE,* BEN--BUT YOU'RE BACK TO *NORMAL* AGAIN! THE MACHINE'S DISASTROUS *SIDE-EFFECTS* HAVE COMPLETELY *WORN OFF*

NOW THERE'S A CHANCE YOU *CAN* CHANGE BACK TO *BEN GRIMM*--WITHOUT IT AFFECTING YOUR *BRAIN*

THERE *IS,* HUH?

KRAK!

NOT ANY *MORE* THERE AINT

I'M *DONE* MESSIN' AROUND WITH TRYIN' TA *CHANGE* MYSELF

I NEVER HADDA CHANCE TO *REALIZE* BEFORE HOW MUCH I *LIKE* BEIN' THE BLUE-EYED, BLUSHIN' *THING*

'N SINCE MY *SWEET PATOOTIE* LIKES ME THIS WAY--THEN THAT'S *IT*

ANYONE CAN LOOK LIKE ONE'A *YOU* TWO CLOWNS

BUT I'M SOMETHIN' *SPECIAL*-- 'N THAT'S WHERE IT'S *AT*

SO, SEE YA *AROUND*, KIDDIES! ALICIA 'N ME GOT SOME CLASSY *CELEBRATIN'* TO DO

HOW *WONDERFUL* THAT EVERYTHING TURNED OUT ALL RIGHT

YEAH, SIS-- FOR EVERY-ONE EXCEPT *ME*

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN*, JOHNNY?

BEN'S GOT *ALICIA!* YOU'VE GOT *SUE!* BUT WHAT ABOUT *MY* GIRL? CRYSTAL'S *GONE*--HALF-WAY AROUND THE *WORLD* TO JOIN THE *INHUMANS*

NO ONE'S BREAKING HIS HEART WORRYING ABOUT *JOHNNY STORM!* NO ONE *CARES* THAT I LOST THE GIRL I *LOVE*

OF COURSE WE CARE, JOHNNY! BUT WE'VE HAD A LIFE-AND-DEATH PROBLEM TO LICK

SURE! THERE'S ALWAYS A PROBLEM-- ALWAYS SOMETHING TO STOP ME FROM GOING AFTER CRYS

LEGGO! I DON'T NEED YOUR SYMPATHY

I DON'T NEED ANY-THING, EXCEPT A CHANCE TO GET CRYS BACK AGAIN

IF NO ONE'LL HELP, I'LL GO AFTER HER ALONE

JOHNNY--WAIT! YOU FORGOT TO FLAME ON! YOU'LL BE KILLED

SNAP OUT OF IT, KID! FLAME ON! CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?

I-I'M FALL-ING! MUSTA BEEN OUT OF MY HEAD

FLAME ON!

TOO LATE-- TO BREAK MY FALL

BUT I CAN MELT RIGHT THRU THE SIDEWALK

HE SAVED HIMSELF JUST IN TIME

REED! REED! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US?

OUR WHOLE WORLD SEEMS TO BE FALLING APART

YOU CAN BOTH RELAX UP THERE! I'M OKAY NOW

SORRY ABOUT THAT *SIDEWALK*, REED

IT'S SOMETHING *ELSE* THE CITY'LL *BILL* YOU FOR

WELL, I'M GONNA *SPLIT* FOR A WHILE

I'VE GOT A LOT OF *THINKING* TO DO

*BUT, REED AND SUE RICHARDS ARE BARELY **CONSCIOUS** OF THE TORCH'S DEPARTURE--AS **ANOTHER** STARTLING OCCURRENCE CAPTURES THEIR ATTENTION--*

SUE! THAT *LIGHT* IN THE SKY--IT'S ALMOST ON *TOP* OF US

WHAT *IS* IT, REED? WHAT DOES IT *MEAN?*

I DON'T *KNOW*-- BUT IT'S HEADING RIGHT *TOWARDS* US

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THERE'S NO DOUBT *ABOUT* IT--ITS OBJECTIVE IS *US*

I CAN ACTUALLY *FEEL* A LIVING PRESENCE

IT'S COMING *IN*--ENTERING THRU THE *WINDOW*

I HAVE TRAVELLED AN *UN-IMAGINABLE* DISTANCE TO *FIND* YOU

NOW, *SHIELD* YOUR EYES FROM THE BLINDING *LIGHT*--AS I ASSUME MY *NATURAL* FORM

13

THE TRANSFORMATION IS *COMPLETE*

NOW, THE TIME HAS *COME* FOR YOU TO HEAR THE *WARNING* OF-- ***THE WATCHER****

THE *WATCHER!* I SHOULD HAVE *GUESSED*

BUT, *NOTHING* WOULD BRING HIM TO EARTH THIS WAY-- UNLESS THE *UNIVERSE ITSELF* IS IN DIRE *DANGER*

*THE **WATCHER!** ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVING MEMBERS OF A MYSTERIOUS, **ALIEN RACE** FROM FAR BEYOND THE STARS! A RACE POSSESSING AWESOME **POWERS,** BUT PLEDGED ONLY TO **OBSERVE**--NEVER TO **INTERFERE** WITH OTHER LIVING SPECIES.

--AS OUR LONG-TIME READERS KNOW ALL TOO WELL. --STAN

ONCE *AGAIN* I HAVE VIOLATED THE OATH OF MY PEOPLE, TO TELL YOU WHAT I HAVE *BEHELD*

REED! WHAT CAN HE *MEAN?*

I CAN SAY ONLY *ONE PHRASE!* ONE PHRASE THAT MAY CHANGE *ALL* OF HUMAN LIFE

BEWARE THE OVER-MIND!

THE *OVER-MIND?* BUT--WHO, OR WHAT *IS* IT?

I MAY SAY *NO MORE*

YOU HAVE BEEN *FOREWARNED*

THE FATE OF ALL *MANKIND* MAY WELL BE IN *YOUR* HANDS

HE-- HE'S *GONE*

OH, *REED*--WHY DIDN'T HE TELL US *MORE?*

HE *COULDN'T,* SUE! THE FACT THAT HE CHOSE TO WARN US AT *ALL* INDICATES HOW *TERRIBLE* IS THE DANGER

QUICKLY! WE'VE GOT TO *LEAVE*

WHY, DARLING? WHERE ARE WE *GOING?*

INTO THE *POGO PLANE,* TO SEARCH FOR *BEN*-- AND THE *TORCH*

THIS TIME WE'RE GOING TO *NEED* THEM

SECONDS LATER, IN THE F.F.'s FABULOUS ROOFTOP HANGER COMPLEX--

IF ONLY I KNEW HOW MUCH *TIME* WE HAVE

EVEN THE *WATCHER* SEEMED FEARFUL AND TENSE

REED, HAVE YOU EVER *HEARD* OF-- THE *OVER-MIND?*

NO, DARLING! BUT THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGELY *OMINOUS* IN THE SOUND OF HIS NAME

I WONDER WHAT HIS *POWER* CAN BE?

IT MUST BE TRULY *AWESOME* FOR THE *WATCHER* TO APPEAR

REED RICHARDS! YOU MUST *HEAR* MY WORDS

REED! WHA-- WHAT'S *THAT?*

I AM *PROJECTING* MY THOUGHTS THRU THE *INFINITE*-- IN ORDER TO *REACH* YOU

IT'S *AGATHA HARKNESS!* AND LITTLE *FRANKLIN*

I SENSE GRAVE *DANGER* AWAITING THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*

YOU ALL MUST *FLEE* --WHILE THERE STILL IS *TIME*

WHEREVER YOU *ARE*-- IF YOU CAN *HEAR* ME-- *TELL* US-- *WHAT* IS THE DANGER?

AND *HOW*-- HOW DID YOU *SENSE* IT?

I DID NOT SENSE IT *ALONE*

BUT THERE IS NO MORE *TIME!* THE STRAIN IS TOO *GREAT!* I MUST *LEAVE* YOU NOW...

THE IMAGE IS *VANISHING!* SHE, AND LITTLE FRANKLIN--ARE *FADING* AWAY

FLEE! YOU MUST *FLEE* --BEFORE IT IS *TOO LATE*

SHE'S *GONE!* DID I *IMAGINE* IT? OR--

NO! I SAW HER *TOO!* I *HEARD* HER WARNING

FIRST THE *WATCHER!* THEN, THAT *VISION!*

WHAT UNKNOWN *HORROR* IS STILL IN STORE?

NOW WE *MUST* FIND BEN AND THE TORCH

BUT HOW WILL YOU *LOCATE* THEM? THEY COULD BE *ANYWHERE*

HOLD ON! I'VE GOT TO GAIN *ALTITUDE*

REED! WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO *DO?*

I HAVE TO CLIMB *HIGH* ENOUGH TO EMIT THE FF *SMOKE SIGNAL*

IF WE CAN'T FIND *THEM*-- THEY MUST FIND *US*

MEANWHILE, TURN ON THE *RADIO!* SEE IF THERE'S ANY MENTION OF-- THE *OVER-MIND*

THAT VERY *NAME* SENDS CHILLS DOWN MY SPINE

CLICK

--AND NOW, A SPECIAL *BULLETIN...*

THE *MAYOR* HAS ISSUED AN *EXECUTIVE ORDER,* CALLING FOR THE *DISBANDING* OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR

WHAT?!!

--DUE TO A CITY-WIDE *OUT-CRY,* AND IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC *SAFETY*--

THEY *CAN'T*-- THEY *MUSTN'T* DISBAND US *NOW*--JUST WHEN WE'RE NEEDED THE *MOST*

HE'S GOT TO *CHANGE* THAT ORDER

SECONDS LATER, ATOP CITY HALL--

THERE'S NO *ROOM* TO LAND ON THE ROOF--

--SO WE'LL HAVE TO *HOVER* WHILE I GRAB THAT *CHIMNEY*

THAT'S *IT,* DARLING! SLIDE RIGHT *DOWN!* I'LL FOLLOW *AFTER* YOU

THEN, USING HIS OWN ARMS AS ELASTICIZED STEPS--

LET'S JUST HOPE THE MAYOR'S STILL *THERE*

REED, WHAT ABOUT *JOHNNY* --AND *BEN?*

BUT THE HUMAN TORCH ALSO HAS HEARD THE FATEFUL BULLETIN--

COPS! CAN'T LET THEM *STOP* ME

IT'S THE *TORCH*

HOLD IT, MISTER! THERE'S A *WARRANT* OUT FOR YOU AND YOUR BUDDIES

TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T *KNOW*

I'VE GOTTA SEE THE *MAYOR*

LOOK, KID! WE GOT OUR ORDERS, AND--

S'MATTER, JUNIOR? THE FUZZ GIVIN' YA A HARD TIME?

HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE! DIDN'TCHA EVER HEAR'A THE BIRDS 'N BEES?

HALT! DON'T COME ANY FURTHER! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST

RELAX, PAL! I'M JUST TURNIN' MYSELF IN-- LIKE ANY GOOD CITIZEN

BUT FIRST, I WANNA HAVE A EYEBALL T'EYEBALL TALK WIT' HIZZONER

STAY BACK! THAT'S AN ORDER

OKAY! OKAY! WATCH THE ROUGH STUFF --I BRUISE REAL EASY

HEY! WHILE WE'RE HANGIN' ONTO HIM, THE TORCH IS GOIN' RIGHT PAST US

THANKS, BEN! KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU

REED! YOU BEAT US TO IT

FLAME OFF, JOHNNY! I WAS JUST START-ING TO EXPLAIN TO HIS HONOR

YOU'VE JUST PROVEN MY OWN CASE, RICHARDS

IF YOU FOUR THINK YOU'RE ABOVE THE LAW--

WE DON'T, SIR! BUT THIS IS AN EMERGENCY

AN EMERGENCY?

IF THAT'S THE CASE, SUPPOSE YOU LET ME IN ON IT

IT'S--HARD TO EXPLAIN

WHY NOT TRY?

THE ENTIRE CITY--PERHAPS THE WHOLE PLANET--THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS IN THE GRAVEST DANGER! THE FANTASTIC FOUR MUST BE FREE TO FIGHT IT

FAR BE IT FROM ME TO PLACE THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IN JEOPARDY--BUT IF THAT'S YOUR STORY--

MAY I SIMPLY SUGGEST THAT THE FOUR OF YOU SURRENDER QUIETLY?

OKAY, YOU *HEARD* HIS ORDER! NOW DON'T GIVE US ANY *TROUBLE*

TROUBLE? FROM *US?* OH, PERISH *FORBID*

BEN! *HOLD* IT! DON'T DO ANYTHING *RASH*

NOT EVEN THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* CAN PLACE THEMSELVES ABOVE THE *LAW*

LET'S *GO!* WE'LL LET THE *CAPTAIN* SETTLE THIS --DOWN AT THE *PRECINCT*

YOU'RE MAKING A FATAL *MISTAKE!* EVERY MINUTE WE WASTE--

STOW IT, STRETCHO! SAVE IT FER *DAVID SUSSKIND*

THEY *YIELDED* --JUST AS YOU *KNEW* THEY WOULD

AND THEY NEVER SUSPECTED A *THING*

BUT, TAKING CONTROL OF JUST *ONE* MIND, SUCH AS *YOURS,* WAS ALMOST *TOO* EASY...

NEXT, I WILL CONTROL YOUR *PRESIDENT* --AND ALL YOUR *GENERALS*

AND, AFTER *THAT*-- EVERY SINGLE *RULER* OF EVERY SINGLE *NATION* ON EARTH

FOR, *MINE* IS THE *POWER SUPREME*--

THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE ANCIENT *PROPHECY* TO BE *FULFILLED...*

FROM BEYOND THE STARS SHALL COME THE OVER-MIND-- AND HE SHALL CRUSH THE UNIVERSE!

TO BE CONTINUED!

FANTASTIC FOUR

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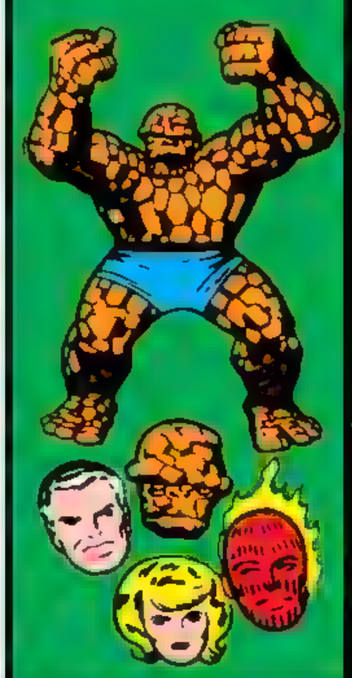

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

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Fantastic Four

WHO CAN STOP THE OVER-MIND?

HEY, YOU GUYS! LOOK WHAT'S COMIN' AT US!

THE F.F. KNOW THAT MANKIND IS DOOMED IF THE ALIEN CAN'T BE BEATEN!

BUT WHO SHALL STOP THE OVER-MIND?!

BECAUSE OF THE DAMAGE DONE TO NEW YORK CITY DURING THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE THING AND THE HULK, THE FANTASTIC FOUR MUST SOON STAND TRIAL IN A MUNICIPAL COURT OF LAW! WE JOIN THEM NOW AS THE ANGRY QUARTET POST THE BAIL REQUIRED FOR THEIR FREEDOM---

(AND THIS IS JUST BETWEEN US, 'CAUSE THE F.F. DON'T KNOW!) NONE OF OUR HEROES SUSPECT THE REASON FOR THEIR STIFF PENALTY! AS WE SAW LAST ISH, A STRANGELY POWERFUL ALIEN, CALLED THE OVER-MIND, HAD TEMPORARILY TAKEN CONTROL OF THE MAYOR'S BRAIN, CAUSING HIM TO ACCUSE THE F.F. OF BEING DANGEROUS LAWBREAKERS! AND NOW, ON WITH OUR FAR-OUT FABLE ...

MARVEL MAKES IT AGAIN!

HOW? HOW CAN THEY BOOK US THIS WAY? AS THOUGH WE'RE COMMON CRIMINALS?

DON'T WORRY, SIS! WE'LL FIND A WAY TO CLEAR OURSELVES

TWENTY THOUSAND CLAMS! I DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD THAT MUCH

YOU BEEN HOLDIN' OUT ON US, STRETCHO?

IT'S FROM MY PERSONAL SAVINGS, BEN! IT'S MONEY I'VE BEEN PAID FOR SOME OF MY INVENTIONS

OKAY! OKAY! FORK IT OVER 'N LET'S GIT OUTTA HERE

I'LL GIVE YOU A RECEIPT FOR THAT, MR. RICHARDS

WRITTEN, ILLUSTRATED, AND HASSLED-OVER BY:
STAN LEE and JOHN BUSCEMA
EMBELLISHED BY FRANK GIACOIA AND HIS MAGIC BRUSH
LETTERED BY SAM ROSEN AND HIS SCRATCHY PEN

HERE THEY COME

WOW! NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE SNAPPING A SHOT LIKE THIS-- THE F.F. OUT ON BAIL

HOW ABOUT A STATEMENT, MISTER?

SORRY! WE'VE NOTHING TO SAY

S'MATTER, RICHARDS? YOU TOO GOOD TO TALK TO THE PRESS?

YOU'RE LUCKY THEY DIDN'T LOCK UP ALL FOUR OF YOU-- AND THROW AWAY THE KEY

PRESS

HOLD IT, RICHARDS! YOU'VE AN OBLIGATION TO THE PUBLIC

EXACTLY! THAT'S WHY WE'RE TAKING OFF

THERE'S STILL SOME STRANGE, TERRIBLE DANGER FACING THIS CITY--- FACING THE ENTIRE WORLD!

AND WE'RE NOT HELPING BY WASTING OUR TIME HERE

DANGER? WHAT KIND OF DANGER?

IF WE DON'T GET OUT OF HERE, YOU'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH

JOHNNY! WE CAN USE A SMOKE SCREEN

I DIG YOU, REED! FLAME ON!

HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON? I-- I CAN'T SEE

IT'S THE TORCH! HE'S DOIN' IT SO THEY CAN GET AWAY

AGAIN THEY'RE USING THOSE DANGEROUS POWERS OF THEIRS AGAINST INNOCENT PEOPLE

BUT THEY WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT! WE'LL SEE TO THAT

GOOD WORK, JOHNNY! NOW-- WHERE'S THE POGO PLANE?

THAT CAN'T HELP US! WE LEFT IT ON THE ROOF

REED! LET'S NOT GET INTO MORE TROUBLE

CREEPS! I OUGHTTA WHUMP 'EM CLEAN BACK TA YANCY STREET

WE'VE GOT TO REACH THE PLANE BEFORE THE SMOKE CLEARS

BUT IT ISN'T POSSIBLE

ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE-- FOR THE FANTASTIC FOUR

CLICK!

SHOOSH!

NOW, IF I CAN JUST GUIDE HER TO THE GROUND FROM HERE---

BUT, AT THAT MOMENT--A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY---

HEY, LOOK! WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?

I DUNNO! YOU TELL ME

LOOK AT THE SIZE OF 'IM, WILLYA?

AND HOW ABOUT THOSE THREADS? LIKE THEY'RE OUTTA-SITE

MY APPEARANCE HAS ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE PUNY EARTHLINGS

MUST BE SOME KINDA ADVERTISING STUNT

YOU KNOW IT!

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN WITH 'IM

HEY, MAN-- I HEARD OF CATS BEIN' OUT OF THIS WORLD--- BUT YOU'RE TOO MUCH

SO TAKE US TO YOUR LEADER, HUH?

ASK 'IM WHAT HE'S SELLIN', BERNIE

SHALL A COLOSSUS BE PLAGUED BY MINDLESS ANTS?

THE OVER-MIND SAYS-- NO!

HELPLESS ONES, THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO LOOK SO FEARFUL--

YOU ARE NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO FEEL MY MIGHT

I HAVE NO WISH TO HARM YOU--- YET

BUT, I MUST SPARE MYSELF THE INDIGNITY OF YOUR LOATHSOME CURIOSITY

THUS, WITH A CASUAL THOUGHT, I CHANGE MY IMAGE IN YOUR EYES

AND SO I WALK AMONG YOU, WHILE NONE SUSPECT---

--THAT IT IS I WHO SOON SHALL CRUSH YOUR WORLD

SOMETHING IN THE *SKY* HAS AROUSED THEIR PRIMITIVE *INTEREST*

A PAIR OF HUMAN *ARMS*-- STRETCHING TO THAT *AIRCRAFT*

I WAS NOT *AWARE* THEY HAD SUCH POWER

I MUST LEARN *MORE*

I *DID* IT! NOW PREPARE TO GET *ABOARD*

I'LL CLIMB UP AND RAISE YOU *AFTER* ME

SUE! YOU *FIRST!* THEN *BEN*

DON'T *WORRY*, REED! I'LL HOLD THEM *BACK* FOR YOU

GRAB MY *ARMS*, BEN-- BEFORE THE CROWD *SURROUNDS* US AGAIN

IF YA *DROP* ME, I'LL *CLOBBER* YA!

HEY! WHAT *GIVES?*

WHO'S THE CLOWN WIT' THE KING-SIZE *MITT?*

THWIP!

STAND *ASIDE*, HUMAN --- IF SUCH YOU *ARE* ---

I WISH TO LEARN *MORE* ABOUT THE ONE WHOSE *LIMBS* CAN STRETCH

AND THIS *SHIP!* I HAVE NEVER SEEN ITS *LIKE*

IT *INTERESTS* THE OVER-MIND

BIG DEAL! I'M ALL *SHOOK-UP*

NOW BACK TO YER **WAX-WORKS,** SONNY-- AFORE I MOP UP THE **FLOOR** WIT'CHA

YOU **DARE** TO PUSH THE **OVER-MIND?**

YOU WILL **NEVER** DO SO AGAIN!

YOU AIN'T THE **HULK** IN DISGUISE, OR SOMETHIN'?

HEY, WISE GUY--I **FELT** THAT

WHAT? YOU STILL **LIVE!**

BEN! WHAT'S THE **TROUBLE?** WHO **IS** THAT?

I DON'T **LIKE** IT, SUE! **JOHNNY**-- SEE IF YOU CAN LEND A **HAND**

ARE YOU **KIDDING,** REED?

ANYTIME THE **THING** CAN'T HANDLE ONE OVERGROWN JOKER LIKE **THAT**...

I DIDN'T ASK FOR YOUR **OPINION,** BOY! I SAID **HELP BEN**

KEEP YER **SHIRT** ON, CURLY! **I** AIN'T THE ONE WHO'S GONNA NEED HELP

AWRIGHT, BIG MAN--- NOW IT'S **MY** TURN

JUST **SMILE,** SWEETIE! IT'LL ONLY HURT A **MINNIT**

WHAT? I CANNOT **BELIEVE** YOU WOULD BE SO **INSANE**...

YA **BETTER** BELIEVE IT!

ON

UP UNTIL *NOW*, YOUR ANTICS *AMUSED* ME---

BUT THE TIME HAS COME TO SHOW YOU THE *FOLLY* OF YOUR ACT

THE WAY HE'S *LOOKIN'* AT ME--I--I CAN'T *MOVE*

IT'S LIKE SOMETHIN' BURNIN' IN MY *SKULL*

YER *CHANGIN'!* YA LOOK *DIFFERENT* THAN YOU DID BEFORE

NOW YOU SEE ME AS I REALLY *AM*

NOW YOU SEE--THE *OVER-MIND*

KRAK!

AND NOW YOU SHALL FEEL-- MY *POWER*

BEN!

REED WAS *RIGHT!* BEN'S NOT UP AGAINST SOME *ORDINARY* BRUISER

THAT GUY'S A *POWER-HOUSE!* MAYBE *STRONGER* THAN THE *THING*

SO! YOU ARE ABLE TO HURL BOLTS OF *FLAME* AT ME

BUT NOW YOU SHALL SEE WHAT *I* CAN DO

MINE IS THE POWER TO *SEIZE* YOUR FLAME--

--AND *ALTER* IT, INTO A SPHERE OF TOTAL *ENERGY*

HAH! YOU ARE *UNNERVED!* YOU SEE YOU CANNOT *HARM* ME

HE'S *RIGHT!* HE SOAKS IT UP LIKE *NOTHING*

NOW, SEE HOW EASILY THE *OVER-MIND* CAN TURN YOUR OWN WEAPON *AGAINST* YOU

OHHHH---

JOHNNY!

REED! HIS FLAME IS *OUT!* HE'S *FALLING!*

NOT IF *I* CAN HELP IT

I'LL BRACE MY *FEET* AGAINST THE SHIP, FOR *SUPPORT*...

AND THEN, REACH *OUT*...

YOU *GOT* HIM!

BUT *BEN* IS STILL IN DANGER! USE YOUR *FORCE FIELD*... FAST

HE *SENSES* IT! HE'S TURNING *AROUND*

AN INVISIBLE *AURA* SUDDENLY SURROUNDS ME

MY MATCHLESS *MIND* SHALL FIND ITS *SOURCE*

THE *FEMALE!* IN THE SHIP ABOVE

REED--- *HURRY--* BACK INTO THE *SHIP*

HE--HE'S *SHATTERING* MY FORCE FIELD

NO MENTAL THRUST OF *YOURS* CAN WITHSTAND *MINE*

OKAY, BIG MAN! NOW THAT YA *HAD* YER LITTLE PARTY--

HERE'S WHERE YA START *PAYIN'* FER IT-- IN *SPADES*

YOU WILL *NOT* STRIKE AT ME

I-- CAN'T *MOVE*

SUMPIN'S HOLDIN' ME *BACK*

THERE IS NO NEED TO *CONTINUE* THIS USELESS GAME

I HAVE *LEARNED* ALL THAT I DESIRE! YOUR POWERS ARE *NO* THREAT TO ME

THUS, I REVERT TO MY SEEMINGLY *HUMAN* GARB

BUT, BEFORE I *DEPART*, THERE IS ONE THING *MORE*..

I *ERASE* THIS MEMORY FROM YOUR UNSUSPECTING BRAINS

YOU WILL *FORGET* ALL THAT HAS OCCURRED

HEY! WHAT GIVES?

YOU MUST HAVE *STUMBLED*, JOHNNY

I KINDA FEEL AS IF I *FERGOT* SOMETHIN'

LET'S NOT FORGET TO GET *OUT* OF HERE BEFORE THE *CROWD* RETURNS

LET'S *GO*! I'LL FLY AFTER THE SHIP

LAST ONE BACK IS *DR. DOOM*

IT'S A *TIE!* I MUST BE GETTING *OLD*

WOW! REED'S NOT WASTING A *MINUTE*

HE MUST STILL BE *WORRIED* ABOUT THAT WARNING

REED, DO YOU THINK MANKIND REALLY *IS* IN DANGER?

I'M *AFRAID* SO, HONEY

BECAUSE OF WHAT THE *WATCHER* TOLD US?*

* NO, YOU DIDN'T MISS A PANEL. IT HAPPENED LAST ISH! -- STAN.

YES! PLUS THE PREDICTION OF *AGATHA HARKNESS!* SHE MUST HAVE-- *WAIT!*

WHO'S *THAT* --TAMPERING WITH THE OUTSIDE OF OUR *DOOR?*

IT'S *ME*-- YOUR *LANDLORD*

I *WARNED* YOU NOT TO COME BACK HERE! THIS BUILDING DOESN'T ACCEPT *CRIMINALS* AS TENANTS

I *HEARD* ABOUT YOU BEING OUT ON *BAIL*

CLICK!

HEY! THE CREEP IS LOCKIN' US *OUT*

AND YOU'LL *STAY* LOCKED OUT! I'VE THE *LAW* ON MY SIDE

SO GO FIND YOURSELF *ANOTHER* SO-CALLED *HEADQUARTERS*

BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL OUR *EQUIPMENT?*

REED! YOU'RE NOT LETTING HIM *DO* THIS, ARE YOU?

I DON'T *KNOW*, JOHNNY! WE'RE IN *ENOUGH* TROUBLE NOW! I'LL HAVE TO CONSULT A *LAWYER!*

CONSULT ALL YOU *WANT* TO-- AS LONG AS YOU FREAKS GET *OFF* MY PREMISES

SO WE'RE FREAKS, HUH?

FUNNY THAT YA NOTICED

Y-YOU CRUSHED THAT STEEL PADLOCK --WITH YOUR BARE HAND

S'MATTER? YOU WANT I SHOULD'A WORE GLOVES?

S-STOP! STAY BACK

STOP WHINING, COLLINS! I'LL SEE THAT NO ONE HURTS YOU

YOU MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN RID OF US-- IF YOU'D BEEN CIVIL ABOUT IT

I PRIDE MYSELF ON THE FACT THAT I SELDOM LOSE MY TEMPER

BUT NOBODY CALLS THE FANTASTIC FOUR A GROUP OF FREAKS-- AND GETS AWAY WITH IT

SO WE'RE EVICTING YOU, COLLINS! AND DON'T COME BACK-- TILL WE SAY SO

THWINK!

NOW, I HAVE TO LEARN WHAT THE *WATCHER* MEANT BY-- THE *OVER-MIND*

--BEFORE COLLINS CAN SWEAR OUT A *WARRANT* AGAINST US

BEN! THE *MAIL-MAN'S* HERE--- WITH A REGISTERED *LETTER* FOR YOU

NUTS! PROBABLY THAT JERK *COLLINS*, TRYIN' TA *TRICK* US

NO, IT REALLY *IS* THE MAILMAN

WHO'D BE SENDIN' *ME* A REGISTERED LETTER?

SIGN THE *RECEIPT*, PLEASE-- SO I KNOW YOU'RE THE *RIGHT* PERSON

YOU GOTTA BE *KIDDIN'*, PAL---

HOW MANY *OTHER* GUYS D'YA FIGGER HE KNOWS WHO LOOK LIKE *ME?*

HEY! THERE'S NOTHIN' *INSIDE* A HERE, 'CEPTIN'--

EXCEPT *WHAT?*

A BLASTED STINK BOMB!

WHO'S IT *FROM*, BEN?

I'LL GIVE YA *THREE* GUESSES

YOUR EVER-LOVIN' *FAN CLUB*--- THE *YANCY STREET GANG?*

YEAH! I HOPE THEM SAWED-OFF *PUNKS* GOT THEIR *INSURANCE* ALL PAID UP, 'CAUSE WHEN I GIT *AHOLD* OF 'EM--

KNOCK IT OFF, YOU TWO! THIS IS NO TIME FOR CLOWNING AROUND

CLOWNIN' AROUND? DIDJA GIT A *WHIFF* 'A THAT STUFF?

BEN! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THE *SERIOUSNESS* OF OUR SITUATION?

JUST WHEN WE'RE NEEDED *MOST*---

THE WHOLE CITY'S *AGAINST* US

"I KNOW IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, BUT IT ALL STARTED WITH THE *FIGHT* BETWEEN YOU AND THE *HULK*--"

"THEN, THE *TORCH* GOT INTO IT, MAKING A *BATTLEFIELD* OUT OF THE CITY STREETS..."

"AND, THE MORE THE *FIGHTING* WENT ON, THE MORE *DAMAGE* THERE WAS DONE..."

NATIONA

BTOK!

AWRIGHT! *AWRIGHT!* WE AWREDDY *KNOW* ALL THAT

IF I WANNA GIT A BLASTED *HISTORY LESSON*, I'LL BUY MYSELF A *SCHOOL BOOK*

SIMMER DOWN, BEN! I'M NOT DOING THIS JUST TO HEAR MYSELF *TALK!* I'M TRYING TO FIND SOME *CLUE*-- TO THE *DANGER* THREATENING US-- BY RE-EXAMINING THE *PAST*

"PERHAPS, IF WE TRY TO REMEMBER THE EXACT WORDS OF THE *WATCHER*, WHEN HE CAME TO *WARN* US THE OTHER DAY..."

BEWARE THE OVER-MIND

THE *OVER-MIND*? WHO-- OR *WHAT* IS IT?

I CAN SAY *NO MORE!* YOU HAVE BEEN *FORE-WARNED*

THE FATE OF ALL *MANKIND* MAY WELL BE IN *YOUR* HANDS

"OUR *SECOND* WARNING CAME SOON AFTERWARDS, WHEN *AGATHA HARKNESS* MADE CONTACT WITH US..."

I'M PROJECTING MY THOUGHTS THRU THE *INFINITE*-- IN ORDER TO *REACH* YOU

I SENSE GRAVE *DANGER* AWAITING THE *FANTASTIC FOUR!* YOU ALL MUST *FLEE*, WHILE THERE STILL IS *TIME*

FLEE! YOU MUST *FLEE*-- BEFORE IT IS *TOO LATE*

SO, WE *KNOW* THERE IS DANGER-- FROM SOMETHING CALLED THE *OVER-MIND*

BUT WE MUST KNOW *MORE!* WE-MUST-KNOW-*MORE!*

WE DON'T DARE *WAIT* UNTIL THE *OVER-MIND* HAS A CHANCE TO MAKE THE FIRST *STRIKE*

AND YET-- THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN *DO!* UNLESS-- *UNLESS*---

BUT, EVEN AS *MR. FANTASTIC* MAKES A DRAMATIC *DECISION*, WE TURN AGAIN TO THE MYSTERIOUS *OVER-MIND*---

FOR SALE

PHASE ONE HAS ENDED

PHASE TWO MUST NOW BEGIN

I MUST *RETURN* TO MY HIDDEN *SHIP*

BUT A SNARLING *BEAST* SEEKS TO BAR MY WAY

SCRAP METAL

LET HIM SNARL *NO* LONGER

HOW *SIMPLE* IT IS TO MAKE HIM *DOCILE* WITH BUT A SINGLE *GESTURE*

MY MISSION *CANNOT* FAIL---

-- FOR, BOTH MY *MIND* AND *BODY* ARE THE MOST *POWERFUL* OF ALL

STILL, ALL MUST GO ACCORDING TO THE *PLAN*

THE ANCIENT *PROPHECY* MUST BE FULFILLED

"FROM BEYOND THE STARS SHALL COME THE *OVER-MIND*--"

"--AND HE SHALL *CRUSH* THE UNIVERSE"

SO IT HAS BEEN *ORDAINED*

SO IT MUST *BE*

AND *NOTHING* HERE ON EARTH HAS THE POWER TO *STOP* ME

BUT, EVERY PHASE MUST BE *RECORDED*

ALL THAT I *DO* MUST BE INSCRIBED UPON THE *TABLET OF THE ETERNALS*

FOR IT IS THE *ETERNALS* WHO HAVE GIVEN ME MY *GOAL*

IT IS THE *ETERNALS* WHO HAVE DECREED: *DEATH TO THE UNIVERSE!*

AND SO, I *CONCEAL* MY SPACECRAFT ONCE AGAIN

--EASILY *COVERING* IT WITH THE DECAYING *WRECKAGE* OF THESE PRIMITIVE EARTHLY *VEHICLES*

NO HUMAN *KNOWS!* NO HUMAN *SUSPECTS!*

AND IF ANY SHOULD *LEARN* MY SECRET-- I'LL SEAL HIS LIPS *FOREVER*

BUT, THERE IS *ONE* WHO IS COMING PERILOUSLY *CLOSE* TO SOLVING THE DEADLY RIDDLE---

MISS HARKNESS! I'M *GLAD* YOU ANSWERED MY CALL

I MUST LEARN *MORE* ABOUT THE *WARNING* YOU GAVE US

THERE IS *NOTHING* I CAN TELL YOU

MY KNOWLEDGE OF THE *OCCULT* ENABLED ME TO *SENSE* THE DANGER

BUT I CANNOT *SEE* IT! I CANNOT TELL YOU WHAT THE DANGER *IS*

THE *WATCHER* KNOWS! HE SPOKE A NAME-- THE *OVER-MIND*

IS THERE SOME WAY *YOU* CAN SUMMON HIM?

PERHAPS --- WITH THE AID OF *JOHNNY*, AND *MR. GRIMM*

HEY, WAIT A MINNIT! I DON'T GO FER THEM WEIRDO SPELLS OF YOURS

THE WATCHER DWELLS IN OUTER SPACE! MY POWER ALONE COULD NEVER REACH HIM

BUT, MERGED WITH FLAME AND STRENGTH OF LIMB, WHO KNOWS HOW FAR A CONJURY MIGHT TRAVEL?

I'M GAME! WHAT DO WE DO?

FIRST, I MUST FASHION A MYSTIC CIRCLE

C'MON, BIG BUDDY! THIS IS NO TIME FOR TEMPERA-MENT!

OKAY! BUT WHO NEEDS THAT NUTTY MUMBO-JUMBO?

YOU MUST STAND SILENT

NOW SLOWLY--- SLOWLY--EXTEND YOUR HANDS

LET EARTHLY BARRIERS NOW BE GONE LET FLAME AND SINEW BE AS ONE

FIRE BURN! POWER GROW! FIRE SET THE WORLD AGLOW!

MATCHLESS STRENGTH NOW FUEL THE FIRE EVER FURTHER! HIGHER! HIGHER!

IN THE NAME OF *HEX* AND *SHADE!* LET MY MORTAL IMAGE *FADE*

LET ALL *DISTANCE* TURN TO *DUST!* LET MY *WILL* SUPPLY THE *THRUST*

LET THE *ROCK* BECOME AS *AIR!* LET THE *HERE* BECOME THE *THERE!*

SHE HAS *COME,* AT LAST

YOU ARE---THE *WATCHER?*

SAY NO *MORE!* I HAVE BEEN *AWAITING* YOU

I *KNOW* WHY YOU HAVE COME

I WILL *TELL* YOU-- OF THE *OVER-MIND*

BUT, SUCH KNOWLEDGE WILL *NOT* ENABLE THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* TO ALTER THE COURSE OF EVENTS

FOR, ONCE YOU LEARN THE *SECRET* OF THE OVER-MIND--

YOU WILL KNOW *WHY*-- THE UNIVERSE IS *DOOMED*

NEXT

WHEN WAKE THE ETERNALS!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

FANTASTIC FOUR

115 OCT 02462

STILL 15¢

Fantastic Four

IN THE POWER OF THE OVER-MIND!

IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED!

REED HAS TURNED AGAINST THE F.F.!

WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!

BUT HOW?? HOW?

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

THE F.F. LEARN OF AN AWESOME ALIEN PERIL TO ALL THE COSMOS!

THE SECRET OF THE ETERNALS

CONTACTED BY THE OCCULT POWERS OF **AGATHA HARKNESS**, THE WONDROUS **WATCHER** SPEAKS TO THE **FANTASTIC FOUR** ACROSS THE GULF OF TIME AND SPACE, ACROSS REALITY ITSELF --AND VOICES A PROPHECY OF **DOOM**--!

"FROM BEYOND THE STARS SHALL COME THE **OVER-MIND**--"

"--AND HE SHALL **CRUSH** THE UNIVERSE!"

PLOT:	ART:	SCRIPT:	INKS:	LETTERING:
STAN LEE	JOHN BUSCEMA	ARCHIE GOODWIN*	JOE SINNOTT	ARTIE SIMEK

*SOULFULLY SUBSTITUTING FOR RASCALLY ROY THOMAS, WHO GOT BOGGED DOWN FILLING-IN FOR OUR LEADER ELSEWHERE.

REED! THOSE *WORDS!* SO OMINOUS-- CHILLING--

WATCHER, THERE MUST BE *MORE* YOU CAN TELL US THAN THAT ANCIENT *PROPHECY.*

MUCH MORE, MORTAL--

--BUT *NOTHING* THAT WILL STAY THE *OVER-MIND,* NOW THAT HE WALKS YOUR EARTH.

THEN WE OUGHTA BE OUT LOOKIN' TA *CLOBBER* THE CREEP, 'STEADA CHEWIN' THE FAT WITH *BALDY.*

I DON'T *BLAME* THAT HARKNESS DAME FER TAKIN' OFF AFTER HER *MAGIC ACT--*

MUSTA *GUESSED* THERE'D BE NO ACTION AROUND *HERE.*

BEN, YOU KNOW WE CAN'T *ACT* UNTIL WE'RE *CERTAIN* WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING.

MOST OF NEW YORK IS *ALREADY* DOWN ON US. WE'RE NOT RUSHING INTO SOMETHING THIS VITAL *HALF-COCKED!*

PLEASE. *ANYTHING* YOU CAN TELL US MIGHT *HELP--* ALLOW US A *CHANCE!*

YES. A *CHANCE.* MANKIND MUST HAVE *THAT.*

THOUGH I AM SWORN MERELY TO *RECORD* THE CHANGING AND PASSING OF COSMIC HISTORY--

--STILL DO I FIND *SYMPATHY* FOR THOSE CALLED *HUMAN*--THOSE WHO, WITH ALL THEIR FOLLY AND MADNESS, STILL CARRY THE SEED OF *GREATNESS.*

YES. HOWEVER *SLIGHT,* YOU MUST *HAVE* YOUR CHANCE.

LOOK THEN! AS THE HEAVENS SWIRL AND *PART--*

LOOK AND BEHOLD A GALAXY *ANCIENT* BEFORE THE STARS *YOU* KNOW WERE A'BORNING--

BEHOLD THAT WHICH NO LONGER *EXISTS--*

"AND AMID THAT DAZZLING CLUSTER OF STARS LONG VANISHED, LOOK CLOSELY UPON **ONE PLANET** IN PARTICULAR--

"A PLACE OF PRIMITIVE **SAVAGERY**-- RAMPANT, UNCHECKED--

"--YET EXISTING **SIDE BY SIDE** WITH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO **STUN** THE SENSES!

"OBSERVE IT **WELL**, HUMANS, FOR FROM **HERE** CAME THE **OVER-MIND**--

"FROM THIS WORLD OF BRUTAL **CONTRASTS**, FROM THIS HOME OF THOSE WHO DUBBED THEM-SELVES--**THE ETERNALS!**

"AND **ETERNAL** THEY WERE. FOR, IN THEIR MASTERY OF SCIENCE, THEY HAD MASTERED **AGING** AND **NATURAL DEATH** AS WELL--

"--BUT **NOT** THE STRAIN OF **SAVAGERY** RAMPANT IN **THEM** AS IT WAS IN THEIR WORLD!

"GIFTED WITH ENDLESS **LIFE**, THE ETERNALS WAGED ENDLESS **WAR**!

"NATURE HAD MADE THEM MERCILESS, **CRUEL**. ENDLESS EONS OF LIFE GAVE THESE QUALITIES TIME TO **GROW**, TO STRENGTHEN--

"--AND, ULTIMATELY TO CONSUME THEM **ENTIRELY**!

"THEY LIVED BUT TO **CONQUER**--TO **ENSLAVE**--

"--TO **DESTROY**!

"BEFORE THE ETERNALS, PLANETS **DIED**-- AND A **UNIVERSE** WEPT!

"THE ETERNALS WROTE THEIR NAME ACROSS THE **STARS** IN THE FLAMES OF DYING WORLDS--NEVER KNOWING DEFEAT, ONLY **VICTORY**--AND ITS **SPOILS.**

THE SCOUTS HAVE NOT FOUND A **WORTHY** PLANET FOR CONQUEST IN **AGES.**

WHAT IF THERE **ARE** NO MORE, GROM.? WHAT WILL MIGHTY WARRIORS SUCH AS YOU **DO** IF THERE IS PEACE?

PEACE?! PEACE IS LIKE **DEATH,** WOMAN--

FOR **LESSER** RACES-**NOT** FOR ETERNALS!

EVEN WHEN THERE ARE NO MORE **WORLDS** TO SMASH, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE--

--THE **GAMES!**

"THE **GAMES!** ABOVE ALL ELSE, THE ETERNALS VALUED THEIR INCREDIBLE **STRENGTH,** FANTASTIC **FIGHTING SKILLS**--

"--AND SO HELD BARBAROUS **CONTESTS** TO PROVE THEIR SUPERIORITY TO **ALL** CHALLENGERS--

"--MAN OR **BEAST!**

"AND, CLIMAXING THE GAMES--THE SELECTION OF THE CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS--!

STAND READY, COMRADES! WE MAY HAVE BEEN SLAVES, BUT THIS IS OUR MOMENT TO WIN FREEDOM!

LOOK! THE ARENA DOORS OPEN--

IT IS THE WARRIOR THE ETERNALS MEAN TO TEST!

HE CANNOT BE A MATCH FOR THESE WEAPONS. FIRE!

FIRE!

FOOLS! YOU FACE GROM!

WINNER OF A THOUSAND COMBATS--

CONQUEROR OF A HUNDRED WORLDS!

WHOM!

ALL HONORS OF THE ETERNALS HAVE COME TO ME SAVE ONE--

--AND NOT YOU NOR YOUR FEEBLE WEAPONS SHALL KEEP IT FROM ME!

CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS!

HAIL, GROM!

GROM!

THUS DID THE ONE CALLED **GROM** BECOME CHAMPION OF THE ETERNALS.

YET HE WOULD BE **MORE** TO THEM-- **MUCH** MORE!

YEAH! AN' YA DON'T NEED **STRETCHO'S** I.Q. TA GUESS WHAT!

AN OLD **STAR TREK** FAN LIKE ME CAN SPOT IT COMIN'--

HE'S THE OVER-MIND!

BEN, LET THE WATCHER GO **ON.**

LET'S GET **ALL** THE FACTS, **THEN** JUDGE, BIG FELLA.

AW, YER **BOTH** JUST STEAMED UP 'CAUSE **I** GUESSED THE ENDIN'.

SOME INTER-GALACTIC BOZO'S GOOD WITH THE **MUSCLE**--WHAT'S THE **BIG DEAL**? SO AM I!

LET THE MAN **FINISH,** BLUE EYES--MAYBE WE'LL FIND **OUT.**

THE OVER-MIND DOES NOT WANT FOR **PHYSICAL POWER**--

--BUT NOT FOR **THAT** DOES THE UNIVERSE TREMBLE!

LOOK **AGAIN** TO THE HEAVENS--

--TO THAT DIM, DISTANT ERA OF THE **ETERNALS** --

--AND YET **ANOTHER** WORLD!

"**WORLD!** HOW PITIFULLY INADEQUATE IS THAT WORD TO DEPICT THE WONDER OF THE COSMOS.

"**WORLD!** IT CANNOT CONVEY THAT WHICH DWARFED WHOLE **GALAXIES** IN SIZE--

"--IT CRUMBLES BEFORE THE **TRUTH** THAT WAS **GIGANTUS!**

"AND ON THE VAST, UNENDING **SURFACE** OF GIGANTUS, A GREAT AND NOBLE **PEOPLE** THRIVED--

"A PEOPLE GENTLE AND WISE, EMBRACERS AND LOVERS OF **LIFE**--

"--AND DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE OF **PEACE.**

"BUT PEACE IS A **FRAGILE** THING, AND EVEN FROM **AFAR**--EASILY **SHATTERED.**

THE NEAREST INHABITED PLANET TO TO **OURS**--!

DESTROYED BY THOSE WE HAVE LONG WATCHED--

--AND **FEARED!**

PERHAPS THERE IS **HOPE.** WE REMAINED UNDISCOVERED FOR SO **LONG**--

NO!

EVEN NOW, THEIR GREAT FLEET MOVES **THIS** WAY.

THE **ETERNALS** COME TO **GIGANTUS!**

"THE PEOPLE OF GIGANTUS WERE NOT **WITHOUT** ARMS--BUT SINCE THEIR PLANET'S DAWN, ITS **SIZE** HAD BEEN ITS BEST DEFENSE AGAINST ALIEN ATTACK.

"WHAT INVADER COULD LOOK ON SOMETHING SO VAST, SO **IMMENSE**, AND REMAIN UNAWED, UNCOWED? WHO COULD HAVE SUCH **ARROGANCE**--?

"THE **ANSWER** CAME IN THE SCREECHING THUNDER OF **ROCKETS** LANDING--

"--AND THE BLAZE AND BLAST OF **DEATH-SPOUTING WEAPONS**--

THE **ETERNALS!**

THEY WAR, THEY KILL, AS IF LIFE HAD NO **MEANING.**

HOW **CAN** IT-- WITHOUT NATURAL **DEATH** TO GIVE IT URGENCY?

BUT IN THEIR **MADNESS,** THEY HAVE GONE TOO **FAR**--

THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY HAVE **UNDERTAKEN!**

"BUT IN TIME, THE ETERNALS **DISCOVERED**--

IT IS TOO **BIG**--THERE ARE TOO **MANY** OF THEM! OUR **PLANET** WOULD BE LESS THAN A MOUNTAIN HERE, OUR **POPULATION** BUT A VILLAGE.

AND EACH DAY, THEY GROW MORE **SKILLED** AT BATTLE--WE SUFFER MORE **DEFEATS.**

THERE IS NO **CHOICE.** BEFORE THE TIDE **TURNS,** WE MUST **LEAVE!**

"BUT WHAT THEY COULD NOT **CONQUER**, THE ETERNALS WERE DETERMINED TO **DESTROY**--

"--AND IN **RETREAT** SOWED SEEDS OF **DEATH**--

"--**REACTION BOMBS**, IMBEDDING THEMSELVES DEEP IN THE PLANET'S SURFACE, SETTING OFF A **CHAIN** OF EVER-MOUNTING EXPLOSIONS--

"--THAT WOULD END IN **TOTAL DESTRUCTION!**

"YET, UNWITTINGLY, THE ETERNALS HAD SOWN **OTHER** SEEDS--

WE WERE A PEOPLE OF **PEACE**--

BUT THEY TAUGHT US THE WAY OF **WAR.**

NOW SHALL THEY REAP THE **FRUIT** OF THAT LESSON!

"AND A VAST **ARMADA** WAS LAUNCHED--A FLEET THAT WOULD NEVER HAVE COME INTO BEING, SAVE FOR THE AGES-LONG **WAR** WITH THE ETERNALS.

"AND IN THE **WAKE** OF THAT ARMADA--

"--A **GIANT**, AS HAD NEVER BEFORE, AS WOULD NEVER AGAIN, GRACE THE COSMOS --**DIED!**

"THE FRAGMENTS OF THAT GREATEST OF WORLDS WERE **HURLED** THROUGH THE UNIVERSE WITH CATACLYSMIC FURY--

"SOME TO VANISH IN GREAT **MAELSTROMS** OF SEARING, SWIRLING COSMIC ENERGY--

"SOME TO COME TO **REST**--

"--TO FLAME, TO BURN, TO **GROW**--

"TO **LIVE** AGAIN AS STARS, AS MOONS--

"--AS BLUE-GREEN **PLANETS**, FERTILE AND LUSH.

FOR SO IT HAS **EVER** BEEN IN THE UNIVERSE. EVERY ENDING BRINGS FORTH A NEW **BEGINNING**--

EACH BEGINNING MUST HAVE ITS **END**--

"--EVEN FOR **ETERNALS!**

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE-- **IMPOSSIBLE!**

WE HAVE NEVER BEEN UNDER ATTACK. **NEVER!** THEY COULD NOT **DARE!**

BUT, MY LORD-- SEE THE **SCREEN!** SHIPS IN NUMBERS TO DARKEN THE **SKIES!**

THEY SAY BUT A **FRACTION** OF GIGANTUS' POPULATION **SURVIVED**--

YET NEVER HAVE I **BEHELD** SUCH AN ARMADA.

WE ARE **ETERNALS!** NONE ARE OUR EQUALS --NO MATTER **WHAT** THEIR NUMBER.

OUR **DEFENSES** SHALL REPEL THEM-- **DESTROY** THEM!

THOM!

R-REACTION BOMBS--!

WHAT?!

AS OUR *INVASION* FALTERED ON GIGANTUS--

--SO DO OUR *DEFENSES* FLOUNDER BEFORE THEM *HERE!*

AGAIN IN THEIR AGELESS ARROGANCE THE ETERNALS HAVE *UNDERESTIMATED* US.

LET *THEM* NOW FEEL WHAT WAS INFLICTED UPON *GIGANTUS!*

"AND THEY WHO HAD SLAIN WORLD UPON WORLD SAW *DEATH* COME TO THEIR *OWN.*

"BUT AGELESS EVIL DIES HARD--

THE *SPIRIT* OF THE ETERNALS SHALL *NOT* PERISH.

SUMMON THE *SCIENTISTS ROYAL!*

SUMMON *ALL* FOR--

THE *FINAL PROJECT!*

WHILE WE RULED THE *STARS,* THERE WAS NO *NEED* TO USE THIS DISCOVERY.

BUT *NOW*--

THE CHAMPION *GROM* STANDS READY, MY LORD--

--AS DO THE *MULTITUDES!*

IN *SYNTHESIZING CHAMBERS* ALL OVER THE GLOBE, THEY *WAIT.*

THEN LET IT *BEGIN.*

THE LAST GREAT ACHIEVE-MENT OF THE *ETERNALS*--

LET THE BRAIN-POWER OF *ALL* OUR SURVIVING PEOPLE BE *HARNESSED*--

TRANSFERRED --

--INTO HIM WHO IS THE *MIGHTIEST ETERNAL* OF THEM ALL!

THE POWER OF A *BILLION BRAINS* SYNTHESIZED INTO *ONE!*

ONE MIND TO CARRY *ON* FOR US--TO TRIUMPH, TO *AVENGE!*

ONE MIND THAT IS *TRULY*--

OVER-MIND!

BUT BEFORE THAT POWER CAN REACH *FRUITION*--

--THERE MUST BE THE AGES-LONG *INCUBATION PERIOD.*

BUT WHAT ARE AGES--*EONS*--TO AN *ETERNAL?*

IT REMAINS ONLY TO *HIDE* HIM FROM OUR *ENEMIES.*

AND SO--

--HE IS TRANSFERRED TO THE *INTERSTELLAR BEAMER.*

AND IT SHALL *FIRE* HIM INTO THE TRACKLESS VOIDS BEYOND THE *GALAXIES!*

UNTIL, *ONE DAY*--

FROM BEYOND THE STARS SHALL COME THE *OVER-MIND*--

AND HE SHALL CRUSH THE *UNIVERSE!*

"THUS, IN INTERSTELLAR BLACKNESS, IN A STATE OF **SUSPENDED ANIMATION**, THE OVER-MIND DRIFTED--

"**INCUBATING**--

"--PROTECTIVE **SPORE** GROWING, **DISGUISING** HIS STILL FORM FROM CHANCE DISCOVERY--

"UNTIL THE MOMENT OF **AWAKENING**--

"--OF **RAVISHING** AN UN-SUSPECTING UNIVERSE IN THE NAME OF THE **ETERNALS!**

I COULD TELL YOU **MORE,** MORTALS--

--OF THE AWESOME **INSTANT** HE AWOKE--OF THE MENTAL MIGHT THAT TRANS-FORMED LATENT **SPORE** INTO A **SPACE-CRAFT**--

BUT IT IS **ENOUGH** TO KNOW HE HAS COME TO **YOUR** WORLD--

--AND THAT THE **DOOM** HAS BEGUN!

THOUGH I WISH **OTHERWISE,** I FEAR THIS KNOWLEDGE CANNOT **AID** YOU.

FOR **ALREADY**--

--THE OVER-MIND HAS **BATTLED** YOU, TESTED YOUR **POWERS**--

--AND FOUND THEM **NO CHALLENGE!**

WATCHER-- **WAIT!** ARE YOU SAYING--?

HE'S **GONE!**

AN' WITH **SOME** NUTTY **EXIT LINE.**

IF THIS COSMIC CREEP TOOK **US** ON, IT **SURE** DIDN'T PENETRATE **MY** BABY BLUES!

I **WONDER,** BEN--

A MIND SUCH AS THE **WATCHER** DESCRIBED COULD BE CAPABLE OF WIPING OUT **MEMORY**--

--AND CAUSING THE **CITY** TO TURN AGAINST US AS WELL.*

***EXACTLY** WHAT HAPPENED LAST ISSUE. --STAN.

REED, IF HE CAN DO ALL *THAT*--

HOW DO WE *FIND* HIM--OR EVEN PROVE HE *EXISTS*?

KID'S GOT A *POINT*, STRETCHO.

I SURE AINT CONVINCED HE EXISTS--

ANYBODY OUTFIGHTS *ME*--I *REMEMBER*!

SUCH POWER CERTAINLY WON'T BE OVERCOME BY *ORDINARY* METHODS.

NO--

IT WILL TAKE A *SUPERIOR INTELLECT* TO CHALLENGE THE OVER-MIND.

AND IN *THIS* GROUP, ONLY ONE PERSON HAS *THAT* QUALIFICATION --

--MYSELF!

THERE'S TOO MUCH AT *STAKE* TO BE HAMPERED BY YOU THREE AS I *USUALLY* AM--

THIS TIME, MR. FANTASTIC FIGHTS *ALONE!*

HUH?!

NOW *HOLD IT* A SEC--

DARLING, WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING?* IT'S NOT *LIKE* YOU TO--

NOT LIKE ME TO DO ALL THE *THINKING?* TO BE THE ONE WHO INEVITABLY *SAVES* THE TEAM?

WHERE HAVE *YOU* BEEN?!

REED!

I'VE NEVER HEARD YOU *TALK* THIS WAY.

ME *NEITHER*, SUZIE GAL.

CURLY, IF THERE *WAS* AN OVER-MIND, I MIGHT JUST THINK HE'D PUT THE *KIBOSH* ON--ON--

--YOU!

SHUT UP, YOU ORANGE-SKINNED CLOWN! NOBODY ASKED YOUR OPINION.

REED! MY WRIST-- REED!

THAT TEARS IT!

BROTHER-IN-LAW OR NO--

YOU JUST EARNED SOME LUMPS!

AND YOU'VE EARNED A DEMONSTRATION--

--THAT ALL I CLAIMED WAS THE TRUTH.

YA GOT THE ADVANTAGE. HE WON'T HURT YA BY FLAMIN' ON.

DON'CHA SEE HOW WRONG YOU'RE THINKIN'?

IF SUMP'IN AINT GOT HOLDA YOUR MIND--

--MY AUNT PETUNIA IS RAQUEL WELCH!

HEY!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LIGHTS?!

DANG IT, STRETCH! DON'T MAKE ME GET ROUGH, OR--

NO! KNOCK IT OFF--DON'T TOUCH ME THERE!

NOT MY TICKLISH SPOT, YA BLASTED RUBBER BAND!

YOU WUZ ALWAYS THE ONLY ONE--

--WHO COULD FIND THAT!

CUT IT OUT-- CUT IT OUT!

THIS SHOULD PROVE I CAN MAKE HELPLESS FOOLS OF YOU ALL.

REED! STOP! PLEASE--

AT THE MOMENT WE MOST NEED TO WORK TOGETHER--

--YOU'RE TEARING THE TEAM APART!

I DON'T NEED YOU TO TELL ME WHAT I'M DOING.

THAT'S TWICE YOU'VE SHOVED MY SISTER AROUND.

MAYBE IT'S THE OVER-MIND'S DOIN'--

--BUT THERE'S NOT GONNA BE A THIRD TIME!

JUST A FIRST-- FOR YOU, KID!

JOHNNY!

DARLING, IF REASON WON'T MAKE YOU STOP, THEN MY FORCE FIELD MUST.

NO MORE FIGHTING!

I'LL RELEASE YOU, ONCE WE'RE SURE THIS ISN'T THE OVER-MIND'S WORK.

I DON'T THINK YOU CAN POSSIBLY MAINTAIN THE FIELD THAT LONG, DEAR WIFE.

R-REED-- NO! YOUR FACE-- SO TWISTED, SO EVIL--

DEAR HEAVEN-- HE *HAS* BECOME SLAVE TO THE OVER-MIND.

AND NO MERE FORCE FIELD CAN *HOLD* ME.

HEY! STRETCHO'S TAKIN' A *POWDER*-- RIGHT INSIDE THAT *MACHINE!*

I DIDN'T EXTEND MY FIELD *INTO* THERE--

--HE'S *ESCAPING!*

IF HE GETS *AWAY* FROM US, WE MAY *NEVER* FREE HIM FROM THE *OVER-MIND.*

THERE'S STILL *HOPE,* SIS--

IF WE ACT *FAST!*

KLIK!

JOHNNY! THAT'S THE *MINI-REACTOR*--

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO *REED* WITH IT *TURNED ON?*

IT'S LOADED WITH *SAFE-GUARDS,* SUE--

BUT IT SHOULD MAKE THINGS *HOT* ENOUGH TO DRIVE HIM *OUT!*

THEN WHAT'S *WRONG?*

WHY HASN'T HE *APPEARED?*

BECAUSE, MY DEAR--

I'M NOT STUPID ENOUGH TO *LEAVE* THE SAME WAY I *ENTERED.*

HOLY *PETUNIA!* NOW HE'S GOIN' UNDER THE BLASTED *LAB DOOR.*

I'M STICKIN' *WITH* YA, SLIPPERY--IN MY *OWN* LITTLE WAY.

UH-OH! THE AIR VENT--

WELL, I AINT NEVER *LOST* AT FOLLOW-THE-LEADER *YET.*

WRRUMM!

NOW WHERE THE HECK DID HE GO?

BEN! BEN--*HOLD IT!*

THOSE CONDUITS GO *EVERYWHERE.* YOU'LL TEAR THE *BUILDING* DOWN TRYIN' TO FOLLOW HIM.

WELL, IT'S A *THOUGHT--*

MEBBE NOT A *GOOD* ONE--

THEN--THEN WE'VE *LOST* HIM.

AND WHO KNOWS HOW MUCH *ELSE* WE'VE LOST?

FOR, IF THE OVER-MIND CAN SO *EASILY* GAIN CONTROL OVER *REED--*

HOW DO *WE* STAND AGAINST HIM--?

HOW DOES THE WORLD?!

NEXT *THE ALIEN, THE ALLY, AND-- ARMAGEDDON!*

AND WAIT TILL YOU *SEE THE ALLY!*

FANTASTIC FOUR
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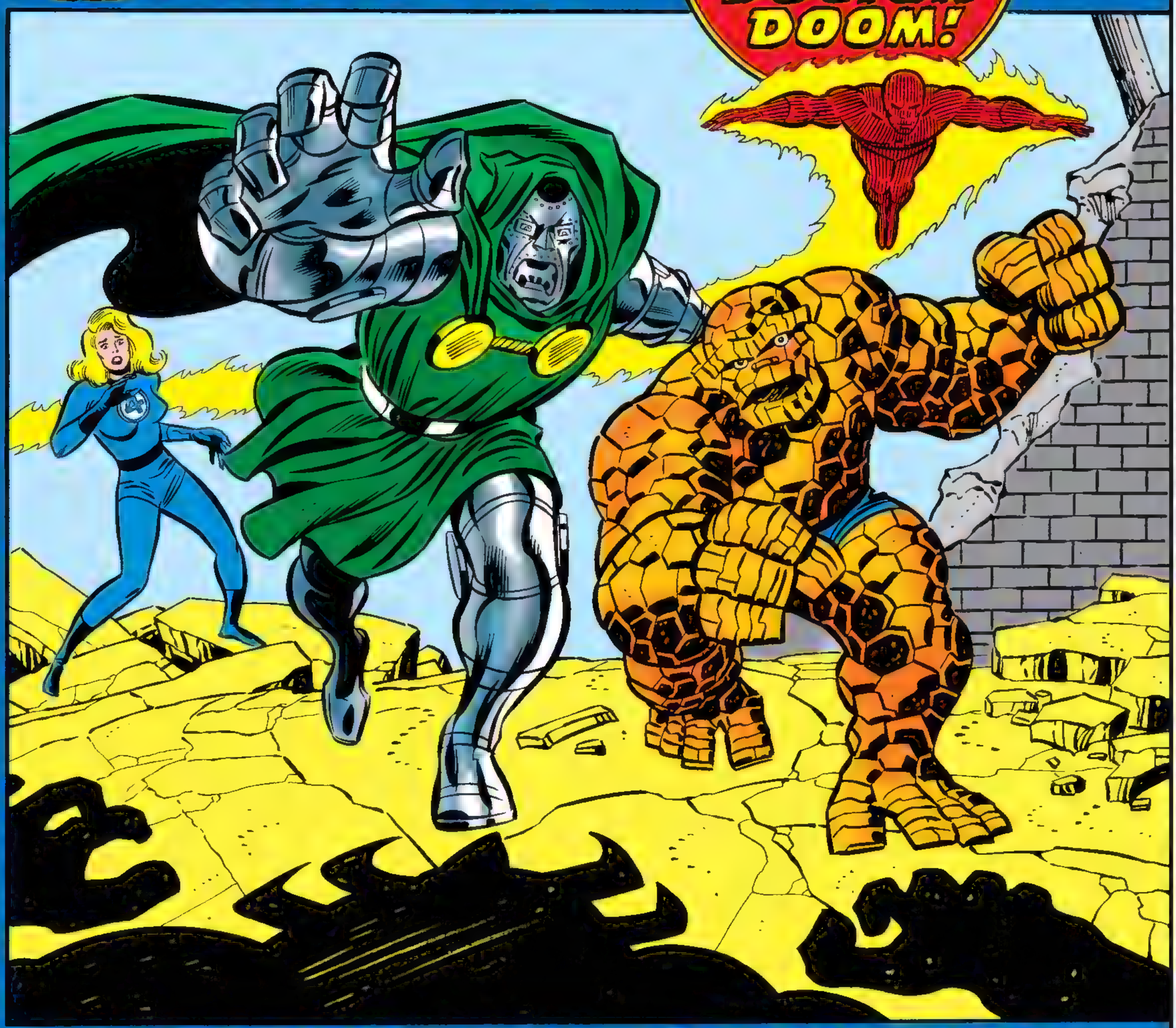
Fantastic Four™

ALL-NEW THRILLS ...AS REED RICHARDS IS REPLACED BY... DOCTOR DOOM!



THE ALIEN... THE ALLY... AND

ARMAGEDDON!

THE FATE OF THE F.F., OF ALL MANKIND, WILL BE DECIDED ON THIS DAY OF--

THE ALIEN, THE ALLY, AND-- ARMAGEDDON!

WHAT IS THE FORCE OF A BILLION BRAINS--THE MIND-POWER OF AN ENTIRE RACE FUSED INTO ONE INCREDIBLE BEING? THESE STUNNED F.F. MEMBERS ARE LEARNING! FOR THEY HAVE JUST SEEN THAT FORCE STRIKE THEIR LEADER, REED RICHARDS--SEEN IT TWIST HIM, AND TURN HIM VIOLENTLY AGAINST THEM--!

BEN, WE'VE GOT TO FACE IT.

YOU CAN KNOCK DOWN THE WHOLE BUILDING AND STILL NOT FIND HIM.

YEAH, YEAH! I KNOW--

BUT BUSTIN' THINGS UP SOME MORE MIGHT MAKE ME FEEL BETTER!

IT'S TOO LATE-- REED'S ESCAPED!

IF THIS CAN BE DONE TO A MIND BRILLIANT AS REED'S--

WHAT HOPE IS THERE FOR US? FOR THE WORLD?

729 Z

STAN LEE, EDITOR	ARCHIE GOODWIN, WRITER	JOHN BUSCEMA, ARTIST
JOE SINNOTT, INKER	ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER	

--BRING YOU THIS EPIC-LENGTH ENDING TO THE BRAIN-SEARING SAGA OF THE OVER-MIND!

EASY, SIS, ***EASY.*** IF EVER WE DIDN'T GET ***SHOOK,*** IT'S GOTTA BE ***NOW.***

WE NEED TO THINK THIS THROUGH, FORM A ***PLAN***-- THE WAY ***REED*** WOULD IF THE OVER-MIND HAD GRABBED ONE OF ***US*** INSTEAD!

OF--OF COURSE, YOU'RE ***RIGHT,*** JOHNNY. IT'S JUST THAT I'M SO ***UPSET.***

IF ONLY WE EVEN KNEW WHERE THE OVER-MIND ***WAS,*** OR HOW TO ***FIND*** HIM!

YEAH. WE COULD TRY HEADIN' STRETCHO ***OFF--***

BUT AFTER SPENDIN' ALL THAT ***TIME*** LISTENIN' TO THE WATCHER ***YAK,**** WE STILL DON'T KNOW ***BEANS!***

***LAST ISH.** --STAN.

JUST A LOTTA NUTTY STUFF 'BOUT THESE ***ETERNAL*** CREEPS, WHO TRIED TA TAKE OVER THE ***UNIVERSE***--

--AN' GOT ***SLAPPED-DOWN*** FER IT--SO THEY ZAPPED ALL THEIR BRAIN-POWER INTO ONE GUY TO ***GET EVEN*** FOR 'EM--

--THE ***OVERMIND!***

NOW MEBBE ***ROD SERLING*** COULD MAKE SUMPIN' OUTTA THAT, BUT US ***WORLD-SAVERS*** NEED--

EEEEEEEEEE

JOHNNY, ***WHAT--?***

AN ***ALARM!***

THE ***MINI-REACTOR--***

IT'S STARTIN' TO LEAK ***RADIOACTIVE PARTICLES!***

BEEN LEFT ***ON*** TOO LONG!

DON'T BLAME ***ME,*** HOT-STUFF.

YOU TURNED IT ON WHEN WE WUZ FIGHTIN' REED.

'COURSE I GOTTA ***ADMIT.***

IT DROVE 'IM OUTTA ***HIDIN'*** THERE--

--JUST LIKE YA ***FIGURED!***

BEN! ***THAT'S IT!***

THE RADIO-ACTIVITY ISN'T ENOUGH TO ***HARM*** ANYONE--

BUT IF REED WAS EXPOSED ***LONG*** ENOUGH, IT MAY BE ***TRACEABLE!***

BUT *WAIT* A SECOND, SIS.

NO *ORDINARY* GEIGER-COUNTER'S GONNA BE *SENSITIVE* ENOUGH TO--

ZSSK

JOHNNY, SURELY BY *NOW*--

YOU'D REALIZE *ANY* EQUIPMENT REED DESIGNS FOR THE LAB--

--WILL BE *FAR* FROM ORDINARY!

AWRIGHT, *AWRIGHT*, SUZY.

WE *KNOW* YA LOVE THE GUY, OR YA WOULDN'T HAVE *MARRIED* 'IM!

HAND THE GIZMO OVER TA *MATCHHEAD* SO WE CAN DO SUMPIN' ABOUT *SAVIN'* YER EVER-LOVIN' HUBBY--

--AN' MAYBE THE *REST* OF THE WORLD WHILE WE'RE AT IT!

JUST *HOLD* THE ELEVATOR, BLUE-EYES. I'M ON MY *WAY!*

HAD TO MAKE *PLANS* FIRST.

SHE'S GONNA MONITOR US ON THE *VISI-SCREEN*-- ACT AS A *RESERVE* IN CASE WE HIT TROUBLE!

AND SPEAKING OF TROUBLE--IT'S WAITING AT THE FRONT DOOR OF THE BAXTER BUILDING!

THERE'S *TWO* OF THEM, OFFICERS!

DOWN WITH F.F.!

THREW ME OUT OF MY *OWN* BUILDING!

UH-OH! IT'S COLLINS --OUR *LANDLORD!*

ARREST THEM! THEY'RE A MENACE TO *SOCIETY!*

MISTER, WHILE YOU'RE PLAYIN' *EVICTION* GAMES, THERE'S A *REAL MENACE* ABOUT TO BRING THIS CITY DOWN ON YOUR HEAD!

STEP ASIDE!

WHAT?!

NOT *YOU,* NOR YOUR ENTIRE CREW OF *FREAKS* TELLS *ME* WHEN TO MOVE!

THAT'S *IT,* BENJY!

MR. WARMTH JUST SAID THE *MAGIC WORD* AGAIN!

SINCE YOU'RE SO *FOND* OF CALLIN' US FREAKS, COLLINS--

HERE'S A LITTLE *SIDESHOW* YOU'LL NEVER GLOM ON ANY *CARNIVAL MIDWAY!*

DOWN WITH F.F.!

GET THOSE *PICKETS*-- GET EVERYBODY-- *BACK!*

HOLY HANNAH!

HE'S THROWIN' A RING OF *FLAME* AROUND THE *THREE* OF 'EM!

W-WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO *D-DO* TO ME?

YOU, WALRUS-FACE?

LONG AS YA GOT SUCH A *HANG-UP* ABOUT THE F.F.--

--I'M GONNA LET YA REALLY *INDULGE* IT!

SOMETIMES HAVIN' A *FIREBUG* IN THE OUTFIT AINT *ALL* BAD.

YA SURE GOT RIDDA THAT *CROWD,* JUNIOR!

BUT THIS IS *SOME* TRAIL WE'RE FOLLOWIN'.

WAS STRETCH TAKIN' A *POWDER*--OR DEVISIN' AN *OBSTACLE COURSE?*

IT'S LEADIN' TO THAT *MAN-HOLE* AHEAD--

Y'KNOW, BEN, THIS IS WORKIN' OUT *FUNNY--*

ALMOST TOO *EASY.*

IF YA BELIEVE *THAT,* YOUR *SMELLER'S* ON THE BLINK!

THAT AINT *EAU DE COLOGNE* WE'RE GONNA WADE IN DOWN THERE.

SHEESH! AN I THOUGHT THE *HUDSON* WAS POLLUTED! I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TA WATCH "*THE THIRD MAN*" AGAIN!

QUIT COMPLAININ', BEN. I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THIS IS PART OF A *PLAN--*

YEAH?

WELL, RIDDLE ME *THIS,* KIDDO--

IS IT *REED'S--*

--OR THE *OVER-MIND'S?*

I-I WISH I *KNEW,* BIG FELLA. BUT THE *ANSWER* CAN'T BE FAR AHEAD.

THEN LET'S GET *CRACKIN'!*

EITHER *WAY,* OL' BIG-MOUTH MAY HAVE BITTEN OFF MORE THAN HE CAN *CHEW!*

RIGHT THE FIRST TIME, MR. GRIMM--

--TERRIBLY, PAINFULLY RIGHT!

WRITHE, REED RICHARDS!

YOU WHO ARE CALLED *GENIUS*-- YOU WHO ARE THOUGHT *BRILLIANT* BY THIS SMALL WORLD'S PUNY BEINGS.

WRITHE BEFORE THE *COMPLETE CONTROL*--

--THE *MENTAL MASTERY* OF THE OVER-MIND!

"FROM BEYOND THE STARS SHALL COME THE *OVER-MIND*--"

"--AND HE SHALL CRUSH THE *UNIVERSE!*"

YOU HAVE *HEARD* THAT ANCIENT PROPHECY--

NOW YOU KNOW IT TO BE *TRUE!*

YET STILL YOU HOPE TO *OPPOSE* ME-- *ME!*

LAST, MIGHTIEST OF THE *ETERNALS!*

BEFORE YOUR PLANET WAS *BORN*, WE RULED THE *STARS*. ONLY AGAINST A WORLD WHICH DWARFED WHOLE *GALAXIES* DID WE FALTER.*

NOW THAT WORLD IS *DUST*, ITS PEOPLE LONG *EXTINCT*. YET *I* AM HERE! TO *AVENGE*-- TO CONQUER AND CRUSH *ANEW!*

AND *YOU* WOULD OPPOSE ME--

*LAST ISH--S.

IT FIRST SEEMED MERE *ARROGANCE* WHEN I FELT YOUR MIND CALLING OUT, *CHALLENGING* ME--

BUT NOW THAT I HAVE *SUMMONED* YOU TO THIS HIDING PLACE OF MY *STAR SHIP*--

I SENSE IT WAS A *PLAN!*

AND AS *PETALS* MAY ONE BY ONE BE *STRIPPED* FROM THE FLOWER--

SO *I* SHALL TEAR AWAY THE LAYERS OF YOUR *THOUGHTS*--

--UNTIL THAT PLAN IS *REVEALED!*

NO-- *N-NO--!*

MUST *FIGHT*-- CONCENTRATE--

THINK OF FORMULAS-- *EQUATIONS*--

THEY *ALL* CRUMBLE AND FALL AWAY.

NOTHING CAN BE HIDDEN FROM MY PIERCING *MIND-PROBE.*

MUST BE --*SOME* WAY--

SUE-- *FRANKLIN--!*

NOTHING!

NOTHING!

MY *WIFE*-- MY *SON--!*

THE ONES YOU *LOVE*--

CAN SUCH RESISTANCE BE *POSSIBLE?*

NEVER HAVE I FELT THOUGHTS SO *STRONG*, SO UTTERLY *UNYIELDING*--

BUT BEFORE THE *OVER-MIND*--

EVEN *LOVE* CAN DIE--

--THOUGH IT MAY LEAVE YOU A BABBLING, *MINDLESS* SHELL!

WHISKERS, IF *THAT'S* YOUR TRAIN OF THOUGHT--

IT'S TIME TO *DERAIL* IT!

WHAT?!

BOLTS OF *FLAME!*

FROM OUT OF *NO-WHERE!*

NOT OUT OF NOWHERE, BIG BRAIN--

FROM YOURS TRULY-- THE *TORCH!*

SAVE SOME FER *ME*, YA FLYIN' FIRE-CRACKER!

I DIDN'T SLOSH THROUGH THIS *SEWER* TA TWIDDLE MY THUMBS WHILE *YOU* PLAY HERO.

THEN YOU BETTER *HURRY,* BIG BUDDY--

KRRAAK!

--'CAUSE I'M MAKIN' MY *MOVE!*

WADDA YA THINK *I'M* DOIN', GLORY-HOG?

IT IS NOT *GLORY* EITHER OF YOU WILL FIND IN *THIS* ENCOUNTER--

--BUT *DEFEAT!*

FOR, THE *PLAN* OF REED RICHARDS IS NOW *PLAIN* TO ME.

HE SUCCEEDED IN *RESISTING* MY POWER LONG ENOUGH FOR *YOU* TO FOLLOW ME HERE.

UNGHH!

I WAS *CARELESS,* BUT STILL THE PLAN WILL *FAIL--*

--AS WILL *YOU!*

MEBBE YA *KNOW* WHAT REED WUZ PLANNIN' AN' MEBBE YA *DON'T,* BUSHY-BROWS.

BUT IF *THAT* AN' TORCHY'S *FIREWORKS* AIN'T PANNIN' OUT--

IT'S TIME FER SOME *SERIOUS CLOBBERIN'!*

WHOW!

HEY!

WADDA YA TRYIN' TA *PULL?* THAT WAS MY *SUNDAY BEST!*

THICK-WITTED *OAF--*

DO YOU BELIEVE THE OVER-MIND'S *POWER* LIMITED TO HIS BRAIN *ALONE?*

WHEREVER YOU GET IT FROM, BUSTER--

IT TAKES *MORE* THAN A COUPL'A SHOTS--

--TO PUT THE *F.F.* OUT OF BUSINESS!

YOU *TELL* 'IM, KID.

BE RIGHT *WITH* YA--

SOON AS I DIG UP AN *ASPRIN!*

JOHNNY AND BEN HAVE *FOUND* THE OVER-MIND.

BUT HE SEEMS SO *POWERFUL*, SO *FORMIDABLE--*

THEY'RE *BARELY* HOLDING THEIR OWN!

I MUST *JOIN* THEM.

FOR, IF WE LOSE *THIS* BATTLE, *REED* --AND PERHAPS THE WHOLE *WORLD*--IS *LOST!*

I SEE NOW REED *INTENTIONALLY* CALLED THE OVER-MIND'S ATTENTION TO HIMSELF.

AND, WITH THE OVER-MIND ENGAGED IN CONTROLLING *REED--*

--HE COULDN'T TURN HIS *FULL* POWERS ON THE *REST* OF US!

BUT EVEN *THAT* DOESN'T SEEM TO BE *HELPING!*

SUE-- ON THE *JET-CYCLE!*

CAN'T LET TALL, DARK AN' UGLY *SPOT* HER.

HERE, BIG MAN! LONG AS BASHFUL BENJY SERVED UP THAT *WRECK* FOR YOU TO CHEW ON--

HOW 'BOUT A NICE FLAMIN' *DESSERT?*

YOUR *FIREBALLS* ARE *NOTHING* TO ME.

AS YOU WILL *SEE* BY THE WAY I--

WAIT! THE GROUP'S *FEMALE* MEMBER!

I SENSE THAT SHE RADIATES SOME MANNER OF INVISIBLE *FORCE--*

--SURROUNDING ME, ENTRAPPING ME *WITHIN* IT!

DON'T GET ALL *PANICKY,* LAMBIKINS. IT'S JUST GONNA BE THERE *LONG* ENOUGH--

FER ME AN' TORCHY TA PUT YA AWAY *ONCE* AN' FER--

MINE IS THE MIGHT OF A *BILLION BRAINS!* THE SUM TOTAL POWER OF *ALL* THE GREAT *ETERNALS!*

THERE IS NO FORCE IN THE *UNIVERSE* THAT CAN CONSTRAIN OR *DEFEAT* ME--

NONE!

GROSS, BUMBLING INSECTS! WILL YOU NEVER UNDER-STAND?!

IF *MORE POWER* BE NEEDED, I HAVE BUT TO SUMMON IT *FORTH.*

AND *MORE-- AND MORE-- AND MORE!!*

BA-DOOM!

UNTIL THE EARTH TREMBLES, UNTIL THE HEAVENS QUAKE--

UNTIL THE STARS THEMSELVES FALL DOWN IN FEAR OF--

OVER-MIND!

HE TORE THROUGH MY *FORCE FIELD* AS THOUGH IT DIDN'T *EXIST.*

BEN AND JOHNNY HAVEN'T A *CHANCE!*

UNLESS--

REED!

IF I GET HIM *OUT* OF HERE, AWAY FROM THE OVER-MIND'S *CONTROL--*

I CAN *REVIVE* HIM AND--

NO, WOMAN! ABOVE *ALL,* YOU SHALL NOT SAVE *HIM.*

I HAVE *PLANS* FOR THIS ONE WHO DARED PIT *HIS* MIND AGAINST *MINE.*

UNTIL NOW, I HAVE WORKED SLOWLY, *SUBTLELY* AT CRUSHING THIS PLANET-- BECAUSE IT *AMUSED* ME.

NO MORE!

NOW I SHALL CONQUER IN *EARNEST--* FULL POWERS RADIATING, *GROWING!*

AND AT MY SIDE--A *LACKEY!* *RISE,* REED RICHARDS--

RISE AND *SERVE* THE OVER-MIND!

SLAY THE *FEMALE!*

SLAY THIS WOMAN YOU *LOVE!*

REED--

DARLING-- *NO--!*

THIS TIME HE'S *FULLY* IN THE OVER-MIND'S POWER.

MUST *ESCAPE!*

STRETCH, YOU FOOL.!

USE YOUR *ABILITIES* TO STOP HER--WHILE I FINISH YOUR *FRIENDS!*

MUST OBEY OVER-MIND-- STOP HER--STRETCH--

MUST--

STRETCH--!

HE'S GAINING! NEED MORE SPEED AND--

SWERVING DID IT! HE STRETCHED BEYOND THE POINT HIS MUSCLES COULD SUPPORT HIM!

UNDER THE OVER-MIND'S CONTROL, HIS RESPONSES AND REFLEXES AREN'T AS SHARP--

OTHERWISE, I MIGHT NEVER HAVE MADE IT.

THANK HEAVEN, NEITHER OF US WAS HURT.

BUT WHAT NOW? I CAN'T LEAVE JOHNNY AND BEN AT THAT ALIEN'S MERCY.

WE NEED HELP! BUT WHO--

DEAR LORD! THE CITY--

YES, SUE RICHARDS, THE CITY--WHERE ON ANY GIVEN DAY, HUNDREDS MAY WALK THE STREET, MINDS TAINTED BY HATE--

THE OVER-MIND HAS SAID HIS POWER IS GROWING, RADIATING. THESE THEN ARE THE FIRST TOUCHED--

FESTERING WITH THE SEEDS OF IGNORANCE--OF VIOLENCE--!

--THEIR NUMBER WILL GROW!

SNIPERS! FIRING AT EACH OTHER--!

HOW LONG BEFORE THE MADNESS REACHES EVERYONE?!

AVENGERS' MANSION!

IF THERE'S HELP TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE CITY--

SURELY IT'S HERE!

OOWWEEEEEE

BREAKING IN THROUGH THE ROOF SET OFF ALL KINDS OF ALARMS.

BUT-- SOMETHING'S WRONG. THE AVENGERS AREN'T RESPONDING. WHAT--?

HALT RIGHT THERE! ANOTHER MOVE AND I SHALL FIRE.

OH, MY WORD! MRS. RICHARDS! WITH ALL THE LOOTING AND RIOTING IN THE STREETS, I THOUGHT--

APPARENTLY I'M A FAR BETTER BUTLER THAN WATCHDOG.

JARVIS! THANK HEAVEN YOU RECOG-NIZED ME!

WHERE ARE THE AVENGERS?

THEY RUSHED FORTH ON SOME MANNER OF MISSION* JUST BEFORE THIS INSANITY BEGAN.

I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO MAKE CONTACT AND INFORM THEM OF THE SITUATION.

OH, NO-- NO--!

*EXACTLY WHAT MANNER CAN BE SEEN IN AVENGERS #93!

--STAN.

DAREDEVIL! CAPT. AMERICA! SPIDER-MAN! THE HULK! SUB-MARINER! IRON MAN! THE SILVER SURFER! THOR! THE ROLL CALL OF SUPER-BEINGS IS LONG, VARIED--AND FOR THE DESPERATE SUE RICHARDS--**USELESS!** EVERYWHERE SHE TURNS, IT IS THE **SAME.** EACH HAS HIS **OWN** MOMENT OF DANGER, OF DECISION,* TAKING HIM UNKNOWINGLY **AFIELD** FROM THIS CITY OF NEW YORK, FROM THIS PLACE WHERE--

NOW FALLS THE FINAL HOUR!

I'VE FAILED!

FAILED!

PART TWO
IN THE INCREDIBLE CHRONICLE OF THE **FANTASTIC FOUR'S** MOST FATAL CHALLENGE!

*AND MOST ARE ON **VIEW** IN THE VARIOUS MAGS WHERE THESE STALWARTS **APPEAR.**--STAN.

THERE'S *NO ONE* ELSE.

NOT THAT I CAN *REACH*-- NOT WHO COULD *BEGIN* TO CHALLENGE THE *OVER-MIND.*

AND WHEN I THINK OF *JOHNNY* AND *BEN*--AND REED-- OH, *REED!*

THANK GOD, LITTLE *FRANKLIN* IS AT WHISPER HILL WITH *AGATHA HARKNESS.*

BUT HOW *LONG* ARE THEY *SAFE* THERE? HOW--

THAT *GLOW!* SHIMMERING ABOVE THE WATER-- *W-WHAT?!*

ONCE AGAIN I *PROJECT* MY THOUGHTS TO YOU ACROSS THE *INFINITE,* SUSAN.

THOUGH THE DANGER *GROWS,* YOUR SON AND I ARE *WELL*--

BUT YOU MUST NOT *FALTER* IN YOUR BATTLE AGAINST THIS EVIL MENACING US *ALL.*

MISS HARKNESS, WE CAN'T DO IT *ALONE!* NOT WITHOUT *REED,* AND--

I *KNOW,* CHILD. BUT THERE IS ONE YOU *OVERLOOK!* ONE NATURAL *PREJUDICE* PREVENTS YOU FROM TURNING TO--

WHO? TELL ME *WHO?!*

SHE'S FADING AWAY WITHOUT *SPEAKING!*

MISS HARKNESS! *PLEASE!*

WAIT! SHE'S GESTURING-- SUMMONING UP SOME *OTHER* VISION--

DOCTOR DOOM!

THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S *DEADLIEST ENEMY!*

I *CAN'T* TURN TO *HIM!*

AND *YET*-- IF THERE *IS* ONE MAN IN THE WORLD WHO IS NEARLY REED'S EQUAL-- IT'S *DOOM!*

AGATHA HARKNESS IS *RIGHT!*

I MUSTN'T LET PREJUDICE *BLIND* ME.

THE SITUATION IS *FAR* TOO DESPERATE!

BUT URGENCY IS LOST UPON THE SECURITY GUARDS AT THE LATVERIAN EMBASSY--

YOU *MUST* LET ME IN!

OUR MONARCH SEES *NO ONE* UNLESS PERSONALLY *SUMMONED* BY HIM.

LATVERIAN EMBASSY

PERHAPS YOU REQUIRE MORE *FORCEFUL* DISCOURAGEMENT?

I REQUIRE *WORDS* WITH *DOCTOR DOOM!*

AND I'LL *GET* THEM--

-:AAAK!:- THE *EXHAUST* FROM HER VEHICLE--

CHOKING-- -:CAFF:- *BLINDING--!*

KRAASH!

-- WITH OR *WITHOUT* PERMISSION!

YOUR COURAGE IS *ADMIRABLE,* SUSAN RICHARDS--

--EVEN WHEN *WASTED* UPON A GESTURE OF *FUTILITY!*

Y-YOU SPEAK AS THOUGH YOU *KNOW* WHAT I WANT--

COULD I BE *UNINFORMED* AND STILL BE *DOCTOR DOOM?*

OBVIOUSLY THIS IS NOT AN *ATTACK.* OBVIOUSLY YOU SEEK *AID.*

AID AGAINST *THIS--!*

KLIK!

THE DEFEAT OF YOUR *FRIENDS* AT THE HANDS OF THE *OVER-MIND!*

YOU'VE BEEN CALLOUSLY *MONITORING* WHAT'S HAPPENED ALL ALONG!

DON'T YOU SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN *WE'RE* FINISHED? THE OVER-MIND WILL GO ON TO DESTROY THE *WORLD!*

OURS-- AND *YOURS!*

I SEE ONLY THE *END* OF ENEMIES WHO HAVE LONG *THWARTED* ME AT EVERY TURN.

AND I REGRET IT IS THE *OVER-MIND'S* DOING, NOT MY *OWN!*

THEN I SEE I'VE WASTED MY *TIME.*

THE DR. DOOM I *REMEMBER* MIGHT BE RUTHLESS AND COLD--

BUT HE HAD *HONOR* AND *NOBILITY* TOO. INSTEAD, I ENCOUNTER POSTURING AND *PETTINESS--*

--OR PERHAPS JUST A MAN A LITTLE *AFRAID.*

HOLD, SUSAN RICHARDS.

MANY DEMONS RULE VICTOR VON DOOM--

BUT *NOT* THOSE OF PETTINESS OR FEAR! VERY WELL. I AM *WITH* YOU!

THEN LET'S *HURRY!*

THE JET CYCLE IS THE *FASTEST* WAY TO BEN AND JOHNNY!

NO!

FIRST TO THE LABORATORY OF REED RICHARDS--!

"*IF STRENGTH OR NUMBERS **ALONE** MATTERED AGAINST THE OVER-MIND--*

"*--YOUR COMRADES WOULD NOT NOW BE FALLING **BEFORE** HIM!*"

*IT IS **DONE!***

TO ONE NAMED CHAMPION OF *CHAMPIONS* IN THE ARENA OF THE *ETERNALS*--

THERE IS *JOY* IN SUCH COMBAT.

BUT *GREATER* PLEASURES NOW AWAIT.

TO ME, MY LACKEY-- MY *MIND-SLAVE!*

THERE IS A *CITY* TO BE *CRUSHED*--

THERE IS A *WORLD* FOR THE *CONQUERING!*

AND BEHIND THE CONQUEROR LIE THE **FALLEN**-- SILENT, UNMOVING--

UNTIL--

RISE!

YOU CANNOT **AFFORD** THE LUXURY OF HURT AND EXHAUSTION! ONE BEATING CANNOT BECOME TOTAL **DEFEAT!**

W-WHAT--? THAT **VOICE**-- I--

YES! YOU **KNOW** MY VOICE--

AND YOU KNOW MY **COMMANDS** ARE TO BE INSTANTLY **OBEYED!**

BOTH OF YOU-- **ARISE!**

BEN! IT'S--

DOC DOOM!

CORRECT, MY INCREDULOUS FRIENDS. AND THE **ANGER** THAT NAME INSPIRES IN YOU--

--DOES WHAT YOUR MUCH-VAUNTED **FORTITUDE** DID NOT.

IT BRINGS YOU TO YOUR **FEET!**

AN' **YOU'RE** GONNA BE SORRY I **GOT** THERE, TIN-BRITCHES!

MAYBE WE GOT **CREAMED,** BUT WE CAN STILL TAKE **YOU** ON!

JOHNNY! BEN! **STOP!**

SUZIE! WHA--?!

DR. DOOM IS HERE BECAUSE I **ASKED** HIM.

THIS TIME HE'S FIGHTING ON **OUR** SIDE-- AGAINST THE **OVER-MIND!**

HIM--AND **US?**

GIRLY, YA GOTTA BE OUTTA YER **GOURD!**

WAIT, BIG BUDDY--IT **DOES** MAKE A WEIRD KIND OF **SENSE.** THE OVER-MIND IS A THREAT TO THE **WHOLE** WORLD-- INCLUDING **DOOM'S** STAKE IN IT!

WHILE YOU *CHATTER*, THE OVER-MIND'S POWER *GROWS.*

MY *STRATEGY* MUST BE PUT IN EFFECT AT *ONCE!*

AN' DON'T *FORGET*--

FOLLOW ME!

WE'RE *DOIN'* IT--BUT IT TAKES GETTIN' *USED* TO!

--WHILE I'M WHUMPIN' THAT *ALIEN*, ONE EYE'S GONNA BE ON *YOU!*

ELSEWHERE, OTHER EYES TURN TOWARD AN AWESOME SPECTRE OF SHEER *POWER*--

A FIGURE RADIATING MATCHLESS *MENTAL* MIGHT--

A FIGURE FROM WHOM THERE IS *NO* ESCAPE!

BACK!

YOU CANNOT *RUN AWAY!*

AND EVEN IF THEY *DID*, LACKEY--*WHERE* COULD THEY FLEE?

MY POWERS SWELL TO THEIR *ZENITH*-- SOON THIS *CITY*-- THIS *PLANET*--

--SHALL FEEL THE MASTERY OF THE *OVER-MIND!*

AND IN THE NAME OF THE *ETERNALS*, I SHALL--

RRRMMMM

THAT ABANDONED *STRUCTURE!* IT CRUMBLES AND *FALLS*--

I AM BEING *CUT OFF* FROM THE *CROWD* I PURSUED!

YA WIN THE *CIGAR* FER GUESSIN' *RIGHT*, FUZZY!

BUT DON'T STOP TA *LIGHT UP.*

THE BLUE-EYED *THING'S* GOT SOME MORE *CONCRETE* FER YA TA CATCH!

ROCK-HIDED DOLT!

WITH BUT THE *MEREST* OF MENTAL COMMANDS--

I DO *REPEL* ALL YOU HURL AT ME!

AND *WITH* IT RETURNS THE OVER-MIND'S *PROMISE*--

FROM THIS *NEXT* DEFEAT AT MY HANDS YOU SHALL *NOT* RISE UP SO EASILY!

DON'T BE *TOO* CERTAIN WE'RE GOIN' *DOWN*, BIG MAN!

THE *FLAMING ONE!* YOU ARE *MAD* AS YOUR COMPANION!

OF WHAT *USE* ARE THESE TACTICS WHICH *FAILED* SO MISERABLY BEFORE?

BECAUSE *THIS* TIME THEY ARE DONE UNDER *MY* DIRECTION --IN KEEPING WITH *MY* STRATEGIES!

TURN YOUR EYES FROM THE *TORCH*, OVER-MIND--

--*DOOM* APPROACHES!

IS THAT A *NAME*--OR DO YOU PRETEND TO PRONOUNCE MY *FATE*?

I FIND *EITHER* FOOLISH INDEED.

PERHAPS YOU JUDGE TOO *QUICKLY*.

I DO NOT *JUDGE*, VERDANT-CLOAKED FOOL--

--I *DESTROY*!

FOR THE *PSIONIC-REFRACTOR* MY GENIUS DEVISED--

NO, YOU PLAY INTO THE *TRAP*.

--TURNS YOUR OWN *MENTAL BOLTS* BACK *UPON* YOU!

WHERE'S DOOM GET OFF GRABBIN' *ALL* THE CREDIT FER THAT GIZMO?

SUZIE *TOL'* ME HE BUILT IT FROM SUMP'N *REED* ALREADY HAD STARTED.

WE CAN HASSLE OUT THE *COPYRIGHT* LATER, BEN--

--THE *IMPORTANT* THING IS, IT *WORKS!*

CEASE *BANTERING!* DEPLOY YOURSELVES TO ATTACK *EN MASSE!*

IF YA MEAN START *CLOBBERIN'*--

FLAP!

JUST *SAY SO!*

ORANGE-HUED ODDITY! YOU WILL NOT SURVIVE *ONE STEP* FORWARD!

SHEESH! IT'S TOO MUCH! DOC DOOM *SAVIN'* ME!

ZDAK!

MY INTEREST IS LESS IN SAVING *YOU,* GRIMM--

BRAK-OW!

--THAN IN REDIRECTING THAT *BLAST!*

IT'S *MORTIFYIN'!* MY BEST PUNCH DON'T *PHASE* 'IM, BUT SOME NUTTY LITTLE *DOODAD* PUTS 'IM DOWN FER THE *COUNT!*

WATCH IT, BEN. HE'S NOT *OUT* YET.

HE'S STARTIN' TO *RISE.*

OUR FOE IS FORMIDABLE *INDEED,* BUT THE *PSIONIC-REFRACTOR* BEGINS TO TAKE ITS TOLL.

AGAIN-- EXECUTE THE *BATTLE PLAN* I DEVISED!

I THOUGHT *REED RICHARDS* THE ONLY BEING ON EARTH *CAPABLE* OF ORGANIZING A FORCE *AGAINST* ME--

BUT I SEE *NOW* HE CALLED SO MUCH ATTENTION TO *HIMSELF* TO DELAY MY LEARNING OF OTHERS SUCH AS *YOU!*

NO MORE DO I MISDIRECT MY EFFORTS AT THE OTHER *TWO*--IT IS *YOUR* MIND THAT IS THE *DANGER*--

IT IS *YOUR* MIND THAT SHALL SUFFER THE *FULL FORCE* OF MY FURY!

N-NO-- HE'S NOT GOIN' FOR *US* AS WE EXPECTED--

DOOM'S *OFF-GUARD*--!

=UNGHHHHHH!=

MY *ARMOR*-- MY IMPERVIOUS ARMOR!

IF IT CAN WITHSTAND A FEW MOMENTS *MORE*-- PRESERVE MY LIFE, MY *SANITY*--

I CAN BRING THE *PSIONIC-REFRACTOR* BACK INTO PLAY!

BUT I AM *WEAKENED* --AND THE *INTENSITY* OF HIS ATTACK *MOUNTS.*

THE *SIDE EFFECTS* ALONE *STUN* THE TORCH AND THE THING!

AND THE PROUD LORD OF LATVERIA CRIES OUT!

NOW, SUSAN RICHARDS! IT IS TIME FOR OUR *LAST LINE* OF DEFENSE!

THEN THIS IS WHY DR. DOOM HAD ME STAY *HIDDEN!*

MUST SEND OUT MY INVISIBLE *FORCE FIELD*--

IT WILL *LESSEN* THE INTENSITY OF THE OVER-MIND'S *ATTACK*--

--UNTIL THE *FEEDBACK* OF MIND-BLASTS FROM THE PSIONIC-REFRACTOR *GETS* HIM!

BUT--

W-WHAT--?!

SOMETHING *SEIZING* ME-- *LIFTING* ME--

NO-- *NO!*

YOU! THE ONE I AM ORDERED TO *KILL*. OVER-MIND SAYS *KILL*.

ONCE YOU *ESCAPED*-- BUT NOT *THIS* TIME.

THIS TIME MY *ARM* ENCIRCLES YOU--*SURROUNDS* YOU--

--AND WILL *CRUSH* YOU!

REED! *REED!* YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *DOING*--!

YOU'RE FORCING ME TO USE THE FIELD *MYSELF!*

SOMETHING *BETWEEN* YOU AND MY ARM-- *INTERFERING*.

MUST KEEP *CRUSHING* --KEEP *CRUSHING*-- MAKE IT GO *AWAY*.

HE'S *STRONGER*-- FRESHER THAN *I* AM. CAN'T MAINTAIN *FIELD* MUCH LONGER.

AND *DR. DOOM*--

AND DR. DOOM IS FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE!

WITHOUT THE PROTECTION OF THE *FORCE FIELD*--

THAT WHICH I MOST *FEARED* MAY *HAPPEN*--

THE COMPONENTS OF THE PSIONIC-REFRACTOR EXPLODE!

THEY COULD NOT STAND UP UNDER SUCH A PROLONGED MIND BLAST!

NOW THERE IS NOTHING BETWEEN VICTOR VON DOOM AND WAVE AFTER UNDULATING WAVE OF THE OVER-MIND'S MENTAL FORCE--

NOTHING SAVE CAPE AND ARMOR--

AND A FURIOUS, DESPERATE COURAGE.

THOUGH I REEL FROM YOUR MIND-BLASTS, I STILL STAND.

AND WHILE DOOM STANDS--

--HE FIGHTS!

WITH EVERY WEAPON OF MY ARMOR--

WITH EVERY OUNCE OF MY WILL--

I FIGHT--

I-- FIGHT--

I--

THE AIR FILLS WITH A TERRIBLE SOUND, AS THOUGH A BILLION VOICES SHRIEK IN RAGE--

THEN THE SCREAMING STORM THAT FLOWS FROM THE BRAIN OF THE OVER-MIND PASSES--

AND, AS AFTER THE PASSING OF ALL STORMS--

--THERE IS SILENCE.

NOW A TRIUMPHANT CRY SHATTERS THE STILLNESS--

NOW TWO ARMS, RAISED IN TRIUMPH, SEND RAW, NAKED POWER RADIATING INTO THE HEAVENS--

"FROM BEYOND THE STARS SHALL COME THE OVER-MIND--"

"AND HE SHALL CRUSH THE UNIVERSE!"

THE PROPHECY COMES TRUE!

AND IN THE NIGHT SKY, A PINPOINT OF LIGHT SWELLS AND GROWS, BRIGHTER, LARGER--

BECOMING A DAZZLING COMET-FORM STREAKING TOWARD EARTH--

A FIREBALL HURTLING FOR THE CITY--

--TO BURST AT THE FEET OF HIM CALLED THE OVER-MIND!

FROM ITS SPREADING VAPORS, OUT OF ITS HELLFIRE CORE--

SOMETHING FORMS--

WHO ARE YOU?

WHY DO YOU APPEAR HERE-- NOW?

IN THIS WORLD--IN ALL WORLDS SAVE MY OWN--

I AM--THE STRANGER!*

I COME BECAUSE IT IS TIME-- BECAUSE YOU HAVE SUMMONED ME!

*MOST MARVELITES WILL RECALL MYRIAD APPEARANCES OF THIS MYSTERIOUS STAR-BEING IN MANY OF OUR MAGS. --STAN.

BUT, AS THESE TWO FROM BEYOND THE COSMOS COLDLY STUDY ONE ANOTHER--

A MORE MORTAL DRAMA CONTINUES!

REED! WHY CAN'T I PENETRATE THE OVER-MIND'S HOLD ON YOU?!

MUCH MORE OF THIS AND MY FORCE FIELD--

--SHATTERS!

=UHHHHHHH!=

NOW! NOW THERE IS NO BARRIER.

NOW I CAN DO AS MY MASTER COMMANDED!

DARLING! STOP-- PLEASE!

SOMEWHERE WITHIN YOUR MIND THERE MUST BE A SPOT UNTOUCHED, UNTAINTED--

SOME TINY SPOT WHERE THE MEMORY OF OUR BABY--YOUR SON--STILL LIVES!

SOME HINT OF YOUR FAMILY-- YOUR FRIENDS--

YOU MUST-- REMEMBER, DARLING--

D-DARLINNG--

NO! I MUST KILL.

I MUST OBEY.

I--

I MUST--

I MUST REMEMBER --

FRANKLIN-- SUE--

SUE--

I WON'T HARM SUE!

I WONNNNNNT

REED, MY LOVE! YOU FOUGHT OFF HIS POWER--

BUT AT WHAT COST?

BUT, SUE RICHARDS' SOBS--HALF RELIEF, HALF ANXIETY--ARE LOST--LOST IN THE THUNDER OF GIANT'S SPEAKING!

YOU LIE, STRANGER! THE OVER-MIND DID NOT SUMMON YOU.

BUT WHOEVER YOU ARE, WHATEVER YOUR PURPOSE--

MY POWER OF A BILLION BRAINS WILL--

WHAT?

IT DOES NOT HARM, DOES NOT TOUCH YOU! BUT--

BUT YOU ARE THE SUM TOTAL OF THE MIGHTY ETERNALS?

YET WERE THE ETERNALS NOT ONCE DEFEATED?

DEFEATED BY THE SURVIVORS OF GIGANTUS--WORLD WHICH DWARFED GALAXIES?

KNOW THIS, OVER-MIND. AS YOU ARE ALL THE POWER OF THE ETERNALS--

SO THE STRANGER IS THE SUM OF THOSE OF GIGANTUS!

THE POWER OF A BILLION BILLION BRAINS--AND MORE!

YOUR CREATION WAS DISCOVERED TOO LATE--BUT OUR RACE PREPARED ME AGAINST THE TIME OF YOUR RETURN!

AS THAT TIME HAS COME--

SO TOO HAS YOURS!

NO! THAT BLAST--

BATHING ME--CHANGING ME--!

I AM--S-SHRINK-ING--

SHRINK-ING!

AND THUS IT IS *DONE.*

SHRIINNNKIIINNNNG

THE EONS-OLD TRUST PLACED IN ME IS *FULFILLED.*

THE STRANGER CAN *QUIT* THIS SINGLE, DISMAL *PLANET--*

FOR THE GLORY OF THE *STARS--*

AND THE *COSMIC PURSUITS* I FIND THERE.

AS FOR THE *OVER-MIND--*

HE MAY *REVEL* IN AN ANCIENT PROPHECY COME *TRUE.*

HE WHO CAME FROM BEYOND THE STARS NOW *HAS* HIS UNIVERSE TO CRUSH--

A *DEAD* AND *LIFELESS* UNIVERSE--

--*WITHIN* A *MOTE* OF *DUST!*

AND WITHIN THAT SUB-ATOMIC ***VOID,*** *LOST AND DRIFTING IN A NAMELESS PARTICLE OF DUST, THERE IS A* ***SCREAM--***

AND PERHAPS IT IS THE **ECHO** OF THAT SCREAM WHICH BRINGS FOUR WEARY PEOPLE SLOWLY TO **REALITY**--

I DON'T WANNA SOUND LIKE A **SOREHEAD**--

BUT WHAT THE HECK **HAPPENED?**

IT'S **OVER,** BEN.

AND **REED** SEEMS TO BE RECOVERING **QUICKLY.**

FOUGHT OUR **BEST** AND GOT **NOWHERE**--

BUT IN JUST **SECONDS,** THE STRANGER **FINISHED** HIM!

BUT-- POOR **DOCTOR DOOM**--

--NEEDS NEITHER YOUR **PITY,** NOR ANY **THANKS** YOU MAY **PROFFER.**

THIS NIGHT A **COSMIC DRAMA** WAS ENACTED--

I PLAYED THE ROLE **ASSIGNED** ME--AS DID **YOU.**

BUT IT IS **ENDED,** AND DOOM PLAYS **NO MORE.**

WHEN **NEXT** WE MEET, IT WILL BE ON **MY** TERMS, IN **MY** WAY--

AND IT WILL **NOT** BE AS ALLIES!

SO **THAT'S** IT! **DOOM** GOES HOME AN' **WE** GO HOME AN' EVERYBODY **FORGETS** ABOUT IT.

WILL SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT WE RISKED OUR **LIVES** FOR?

THE **STRANGER** COULDA DONE THE JOB ANY-TIME HE **WANTED!**

JOHNNY-- **WAIT!**

REED, I'M **GLAD** YOU'RE UP AN' AROUND AN' NOT **HURT**--BUT I DON'T WANT ANY **LECTURES.**

FACE IT! SOMEBODY **USED** US!

NOW **COOL OFF,** BOY, AND--

YEAH, **I'LL** COOL OFF-- BY **FLAMIN' ON!**

DOOM CALLED IT A COSMIC **DRAMA**-- I CALL IT A **GAME!**

AND **WE** WERE THE **PAWNS!**

LOOKS LIKE THE KID'S OFF ON ANOTHER *TEAR*, STRETCHO.

HE'LL BE BACK AFTER LETTING OFF *STEAM*, BEN.

YEAH, BUT MEBBE *THIS* TIME HE'S GOT A *POINT*.

REED! THAT *LIGHT*--

I MEAN-- *HEY!*

STAY *BACK*, SUE! IF IT'S *TROUBLE*--

NO, MY MORTAL FRIENDS. WITH THE PASSING OF THE *OVER-MIND*, THE TROUBLE IS ENDED.

THE WATCHER!

NOW *LISSEN*, BALDY--

THERE IS NO NEED TO *SPEAK*. I SENSE YOU HAVE *DOUBTS*-- SUCH AS SET YOUR YOUNG COMPANION *RAGING*. I AM HERE TO *DISPEL* THEM.

SO.? *DISPEL* ALREADY.

YOUR PART IN THIS AFFAIR WAS *NOT* WITHOUT *MEANING*-- INDEED, IT WAS THE MOST *VITAL* OF ALL.

BY FIGHTING COURAGEOUSLY, *UNFLAGGINGLY*, YOU FORCED THE OVER-MIND TO EXPEND HIS *FULL POWER*--

OTHERWISE, THE STRANGER COULD *NEVER* HAVE DETECTED HIS PRESENCE UNTIL HE HAD CONQUERED *MANY* WORLDS.

AND SUCH WOULD HIS MIGHT AND CONTROL HAVE BEEN BY *THEN*--

NOT EVEN THE *STRANGER* COULD HAVE DEFEATED HIM!

YOU LOST *YOUR* BATTLE, BUT IN THE LOSING WON A *GREATER* ONE. IF THE SEED OF *GRANDEUR* RESIDES IN MANKIND, IT IS IN SELFLESS *BRAVERY* SUCH AS YOURS!

AND NOW-- *FAREWELL!*

HE'S *GOING*-- FADING AWAY--

GEE--

WHO ELSE BUT THE *WATCHER* COULD MAKE YA FEEL ALL *CHOKED UP* ABOUT GETTIN' *CLOBBERED*.?

TOO BAD *TORCHY* DIDN'T HEAR IT.

WE'LL TELL HIM, BEN. *WE'LL* TELL HIM.

AND WEARILY, *PROUDLY*, THREE HEROES MAKE THEIR WAY HOME.

-FIN-

Cover to 1970's all-reprint *The Fantastic Four Annual* #8

SPECIAL BONUS:
The Fantastic Four #109 house ad featured in April 1971 titles

A printer error swapping *The Fantastic Four* #110 cover's cyan and magenta color plates resulted in a bizarre color scheme worthy of the Negative Zone itself. Although the mistake was caught, a portion of the misprinted covers made it to newsstands along with the correctly colored covers.

The Fantastic Four #111 cover original illustration version
by John Buscema & Joe Sinnott

The Fantastic Four #109 cover original art
by John Buscema & Joe Sinnott

Courtesy Bill Woo

BIOGRAPHIES

STAN LEE

Stanley Lieber was born in New York City in 1922, the oldest son of Jewish immigrants from Romania. Upon an early graduation from high school, Stan was thrust out into the post-Depression wartime economy. Through family connections, he was able to land a job with Martin Goodman's comic-book publishing start-up, Timely Comics, as an assistant editor. His youthful aspiration was to one day write the "Great American Novel," so when his first professional writing job came, in the form of a humble two-page text story in *Captain America Comics* #3, he adopted a pseudonym: Stan Lee. This way, he could reserve his real name for that novel-to-be.

But the world of comics managed to keep Stan Lee constantly employed. His proficiency on the job got him the position of managing editor at an extremely young age. He graduated from simple text pieces to full-length stories in *All-Winners*, *USA Comics*, and other Timely anthologies. His tenure in the '50s saw him expand the company (now called Atlas Comics) output to include more genre experimentation, with westerns, war, horror and crime comics.

All this activity was a prelude to the Marvel Age of Comics, ushered in under the auspices of Stan Lee and a small stable of artists topped off by the formidable talents of Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. Responding to Martin Goodman's challenge to do something to find a way to revitalize dwindling sales, Stan figured he would co-opt the successful super-hero revival at competitor DC Comics and add his own magic to the mix: Instead of being perfect invulnerable champions, Stan's Marvel Age heroes would be normal, fallible, imperfect people, forced to cope with their newfound superhuman traits just like the average person might.

Stan's innovation sent shock waves through the comics industry, and within a few years, Marvelmania was taking hold: unlike other fads of the time, it wasn't letting go. Under his direction, creations like Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, Iron Man, Thor, Doctor Strange and Incredible Hulk flourished in the shared universe they inhabited. Stan developed the idea that these larger-than-life heroes would meet each other in crossovers from title to title, thus exploding the story possibilities for the kids who became eager fans.

In addition to bringing a new twist to the life of the super hero, Stan also brought the reader inside Marvel's "Batty Bullpen," creating a sense of camaraderie and special membership. His friendly and enthusiastic banter in letters pages, house ads, and Bullpen Bulletins brought Marvel Comics to a level of familiarity with their fans that had kids and college students proudly professing themselves to be "True Believers."

At one time, Stan wrote virtually every comic that appeared from Marvel during the 1960s. But when he was promoted to Publisher in 1971, his writing had to take a backseat, and by the mid-'70s, he semi-retired from scripting duties. Over the years, Stan has returned to write scripts for the odd single issue or series, focusing on Marvel's ventures into television and movie development. To this day, he remains Marvel Comics' single greatest ambassador to the world.

JOHN BUSCEMA

Though known primarily for his long tenure as one of Marvel Comics' most prolific pencilers, John Buscema began his celebrated career at the age of twenty-one with Timely Comics. After Timely closed up its in-house bullpen and sent most freelancers chasing down new art assignments, John pursued comics work for a time before he bagged the comics scene altogether and went to work in advertising in 1958.

When he finally returned to comics, however, he did so with a vengeance. Stan Lee recruited him away from the field of advertising and quickly ensconced him into the upper ranks of Marvel artists. Picking up where *Avengers* mainstay Don Heck left off, "Big John" settled into a long run of his own, showcasing the exploits of Earth's Mightiest Heroes. The much-anticipated *Silver Surfer* series was launched with John at the helm, and top-shelf books like *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* were entrusted to his care after Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC Comics.

John's bold, muscular artwork commanded the comic book page with realistic figurework that represented the next evolutionary step in post-Kirby Marvel Comics style. The respect accorded him within Marvel as an artist's artist was of such renown that he literally wrote the book on it, composing *How To Draw the Marvel Way*, the classic "how to" book in comic-book illustration.

He worked from the '70s through the '90s on nearly every title in the Marvel stable, including his personal favorite title *Conan the Barbarian* with Roy Thomas, providing steady work throughout his career. He retired from regular work in 1996, but returned every now and then to the comics scene until he passed away after a battle with cancer in 2002.

JOHN ROMITA

Without question one of the most loved and influential artists to grace the pages of Marvel Comics, John Romita was born in 1930 and, fresh out of a fine arts high school, quickly joined the ranks of comic book artists. As was typical of many of his peers, John drew for Atlas, the 1950s incarnation of Marvel Comics, across the many war, Western, horror, and jungle-girl genres published by Martin Goodman. Of special note during this time was John's work on the 1953-54 Commie-smashing revival of Captain America.

As the 1960s dawned, John was for the first time drawing comics for an employer other than Marvel. At DC, he was working exclusively behind the boards of their many romance comics, like *Secret Hearts, Girls' Love Stories*, and *Young Love*. It wasn't until 1966 that he returned to Marvel comics and the super-hero genre in the pages of *Daredevil* #12-19, but that run's main legacy in John's career wasn't drawing Daredevil. Indeed, it was a guest appearance by a certain friendly neighborhood wall-crawler that would be pivotal for both John and comic-book readers worldwide.

After doing such a confident rendering of Spider-Man in the pages of *Daredevil,* it was an easy choice to tap John Romita as the new artist on what was fast becoming Marvel's most important title—*The Amazing Spider-Man*. After a few issues struggling in the mold of Spidey co-creator Steve Ditko, John came into his own and how! With a bold style regarded as one of the most iconic in comic-book art, John developed a look for Peter Parker and his world that would define the character for years to come. His more muscular and firm figure drawings added a bolder flair to the tone of the book, and his years of drawing beautiful women in DC's romance books paid off big-time with definitive renderings of Gwen Stacy and the introduction of Mary Jane Watson.

For the better part of the next seven years, John drew *The Amazing Spider-Man* (spelled at times by Gil Kane), but that's not the only character he drew for Marvel! He did a brief run on *Fantastic Four,* being the first to draw the book after Jack Kirby's 103-issue tenure, and also drew an acclaimed run on *Captain America* #138-145.

It was about this time when John was anointed art director for Marvel. Once Stan Lee was elevated to publisher, he knew there was only one artist who could help streamline the look and feel of the new age of Marvel Comics in the 1970s, and that was Jazzy John! Though his responsibilities kept him from drawing

a monthly series, John still drew countless covers, crafted the look of characters from the Punisher to Wolverine, designed the Spider-Man balloon for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and took to training the next generation of comic-book artists in Marvel's Art Department, known as Romita's Raiders.

To this day, though semi-retired, John steps up to the drawing board to lend his mastery of the medium to the occasional cover or story. Beyond that, though, the Romita legacy is in safekeeping with John Romita, Jr., who is now—much like his father was at the height of his career—setting the tempo for the visual look of Marvel Comics.

JACK KIRBY

Jacob Kurtzberg was born in 1917 into a gritty upbringing on the streets of New York's Lower East Side. It would be many years before he would adopt the more familiar name of Jack Kirby, but his experiences on the street would help inform the work that later made him a legend. Unlike many of his rough-and-tumble peers, his imagination inspired him to look beyond the commonality of everyday life. He was inclined at an early age to pursue drawing, and he was also a guy who wanted to "get things done." This hard work ethic and ambition took him places most men of humble stations like him would never dream of going.

After some early strip work helped get his name out to prospective employers, a fateful meeting with artist Joe Simon connected the two at the hip, and vaulted both of them into comics prominence. Together, they developed *Captain America* for Timely Comics, and Jack immediately helped redefine what comics could be with his innovative page designs and proportion-exploding panels.

Soon, Simon & Kirby were working with National Publications, turning out hit kid-gang comics like *Newsboy Legion* and *Boy Commandos*, as well as super-hero fare like *Sandman* and *Manhunter*. Like many of his peers, he served honorably in WWII, with combat duties that took him through the European theater.

In the '50s, Jack returned to comics, helping establish the romance genre with its first title, *Young Romance Comics*. More genre work followed for Timely/Atlas, with a prolific output that covered western, war, and monster genres. When it came time to launch the Marvel Age of Comics, Jack brought his dynamic layouts, unparalleled bombast and unbridled creativity to the fore in books like *Fantastic Four*, *Avengers*, *X-Men*, *Incredible Hulk* and *Thor*, leaving his unmistakable stamp on the characters he created.

The King's way of doing things was so popular that it set the tone for many of Stan Lee's editorial decisions throughout the '60s; before they were entrusted with taking over completely, new artists were often assimilated onto books by drawing over Jack's layouts. Jack left Marvel for DC in 1970, this time handling the scripting chores as well as the art duties. Jack's "Fourth World" books, along with *Kamandi*, *OMAC* and *The Demon*, were just a few of the highlights of his tenure at DC before returning to Marvel in the '70s to lend his unbridled imagination to a new cast of creations: *The Eternals*, *Devil Dinosaur*, and *Machine Man*. In addition, he returned to the pages of *Captain America*, the character he had first made famous 35 years previously.

Jack continued creating comics throughout the '90s until passing away in 1994, a creative giant for whom the word "legend" may be too small a title.

ARCHIE GOODWIN

Walking into his office and looking for a job, Archie Goodwin was immediately sized up by publisher Jim Warren to be a meek looking, quiet fellow who at first glance didn't appear to have the necessary mettle to handle the chaotic life of an editor. But as Archie would later say of himself, behind that quiet demeanor was a furtively creative thinker that lived to "lose myself in the fantasy of comics." This love of fantasy combined with a peerless combination of editorial and writing skills, elevated Archie Goodwin's status in the field to be, in Warren's words, a "guy who could play every position."

As a teenager during the '50s, he fell in love with comics and became an acolyte of EC, contributing material to fanzines of the era like *Hoohah* and Dan Adkin's *Twig Illustrated*. Though his abiding reputation in comics would come from his writing and editorial abilities, Archie actually was inspired by his EC fandom to study art at New York's School of Visual Arts (formerly the Cartoonists and Illustrators School), and managed stints surrounding his army service to put that discipline into action. Ironically, the comics that inspired him to go to art school had had disappeared in the wake of the Kefauver Commission and subsequent Comics Code—EC was out of business. Still, Archie was able to capitalize on his schooling and take jobs in other areas of publishing, including a stint as Leonard Starr's assistant, editing for the women's magazine *Redbook* and cartooning for the outdoor magazine, *Fishing World*.

His first venture into the medium he loved came in 1964, when he joined the staff of Warren Publishing. Archie very quickly made himself at home both editing and writing for *Creepy* and *Eerie*, and also launched the short-lived but much-revered *Blazing Combat*. It was with Warren that Archie got to first develop his acumen for crafting short stories, a trait he would be particularly lauded for later in life. Archie instilled a certain degree of class to Warren's small line of mags that helped draw top talent to fill its pages, which in turn established it as a fine inheritor of EC's legacy. His later work for *Vampirella* came in a brief but highly regarded stint that helped more than any other to establish a bona fide mythos for the character.

His work at Marvel began in the late '60s and early '70s, with short stints on *Incredible Hulk* and *Fantastic Four*, the latter title giving him the honor of being the first writer to script the FF other than Stan Lee. But it was his work on *Iron Man*, also inherited from Stan Lee, where Archie would make his biggest mark on the Marvel Age of Comics, writing the first 28 issues of the mainline title.

Shortly thereafter, he began a brief stint at DC after being spirited over to handle *Detective Comics* as well as several war titles that Joe Kubert was leaving. As an editor, Archie was capable of miracles like drafting Alex Toth to draw the classic "Burma Sky" backup story or matching Toth with a Batman story in *Detective*. He also wrote a well-remembered run of *Manhunter* backup stories in collaboration with Walt Simonson, an artist he had a hand in discovering.

Heading back to Marvel, he served as Editor-In-Chief for three years before handing the reigns to Jim Shooter. His later accomplishments for Marvel included negotiating licensing for *Star Wars* and other top-selling movie adaptations, and creating and maintaining the Epic line of books throughout the '80s. He also wrote early issues of Wolverine's solo title.

1989 saw Archie return to DC to write and edit through the rest of the following decade until his untimely death from cancer in 1998. He ended life still in the prime of a career that saw him establish a fine legacy in editing, writing, drawing, and art direction. In particular, he was regarded as a man who handled his job as an editor not simply to shepherd comics through their development process, but also to mentor younger editors into fulfilling their own potential. In this way, Archie Goodwin is still with us in the hearts and minds of the many editors who continue to work under his positive influence.

Biographical material researched and written by John Rhett Thomas.

THE GOLDEN AGE
MARVEL MASTERWORKS
LIBRARY

The early 1940s was a frightening time for the average American. With the specter of war enshrouding the globe, people turned to an entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities: the comic book. Within these four-color pages, inspiring heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Jack Kirby, Joe Simon, Bill Everett and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of heroes.

The *Golden Age Marvel Masterworks* present archival collections of these rare and fantastic stories, many of which have never been seen since their original printings over sixty years ago!

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By Joe Simon, Jack Kirby, Carl Burgos, Bill Everett & Stan Lee
The greatest heroes of the Golden Age band together to fight the Nazi hordes and the forces of evil!

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A top-secret serum turns Steve Rogers, 98-pound weakling, into America's greatest wartime weapon in battles with his kid sidekick, Bucky.

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From his undersea kingdom of Atlantis, the mighty Sub-Mariner protects the Seven Seas from tyranny.

GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOL. 1
By Stan Lee, Basil Wolverton, Syd Shores, George Klein, Mike Surchorsky & Ed Winiarski
Join the fight alongside Marvel's patriots featuring the debuts of The Defender, The Whizzer, Major Liberty, Jack Frost and Rockman.

THE ATLAS ERA
MARVEL MASTERWORKS
LIBRARY

As the post-war era dawned, a culture of escalating tension and paranoia descended upon America. With the nuclear genie out of the bottle, and Communism spreading, the nation's fears turned from leftover Nazis, inward, to spies and Red traitors.

Seeing super heroes on the wane, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s took on the threat of Communism. From westerns to crime to horror, Atlas published it all!

Now, for the first time, the *Atlas Era Marvel Masterworks* present deluxe collections of the very best tales from this historic era!

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Amazing tales of monsters and the farthest reaches of the imagination by comics' greatest talents.

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COMING IN OCTOBER 2008...

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By Russ Heath, Tony DiPreta, Gene Colan, John Romita, Jerry Robinson & Joe Maneely
Take a weird journey into mystery as comics' greatest talents plumb the stark depths of pre-Code horror!

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS LIBRARY

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

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Marvel's greatest stars assemble to form Earth's Mightiest Heroes.

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America's Sentinel of Liberty in action-packed stories of amazing adventure and suspense.

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Presenting the First Family of Super Heroes' unparalleled adventures beyond your wildest imagination.

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When Dr. Robert Bruce Banner loses control, he becomes the unstoppable Hulk!

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Johnny Storm, the high-flying teen Human Torch, in solo adventures from the early days of the Fantastic Four!

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